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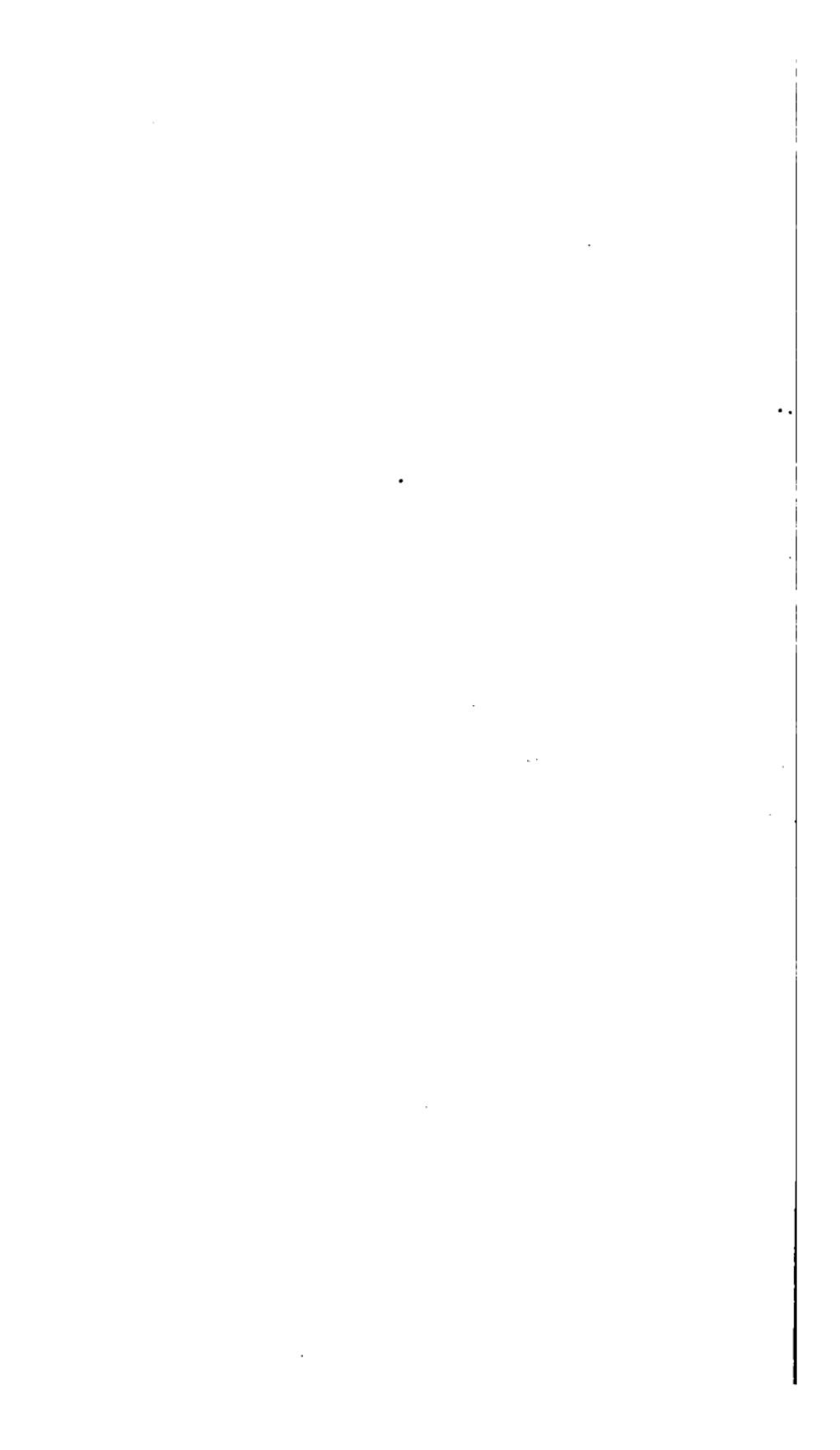


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JANET HAMILTON, *

AND

OTHER TALES:

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"SLIGHT REMINISCENCES."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

PHILADELPHIA:
CAREY, LEA, & BLANCHARD.

1837.

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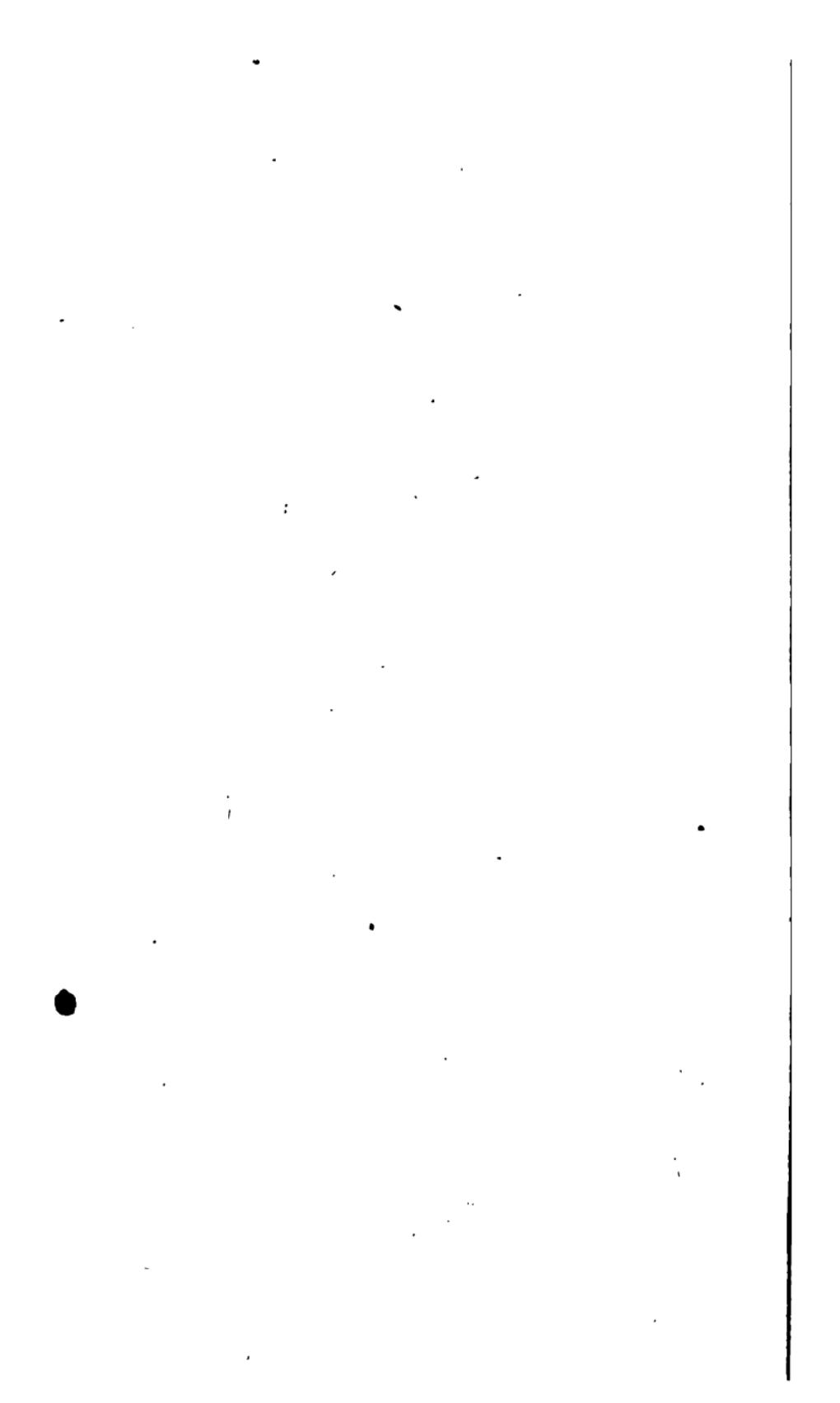
If absence were always to lessen affection, you and I, my dear friend, would have been by this time heart-strangers, but I feel that we are still, and ever shall be, heart-friends; and thus thinking, inscribe to you my "Gossip's Week," knowing that while you gently hem down the bad, your kind nature will find out any good that may be in it, and love it for the sake of

Your old Crony,

THE AUTHOR.

These Tales are selected from a work called "The Gossips Week," and if successful may be followed by the remainder.

A.M. PUBLISHER.



PREFACE.

Boccaccio's gossips (what an impolitic simpleton, says my reader, to put one in mind of him now,) were young Florentine damsels whom our fancies endue with exceeding beauty, rich robes of antique stuffs gorgeously wrought, gemmed clasps, and maiden graces; placing them on a swelling carpet of verdure within sound of a fountain, with a long forest glade sunny and southern, a broad palm tree, a shadowing vine, and perhaps the pillared portico of a marble villa, or a terrace balustrade with a white peacock glossing itself in the sunbeams, for accompaniments.

My gossips had pretty maidens too amongst

1*

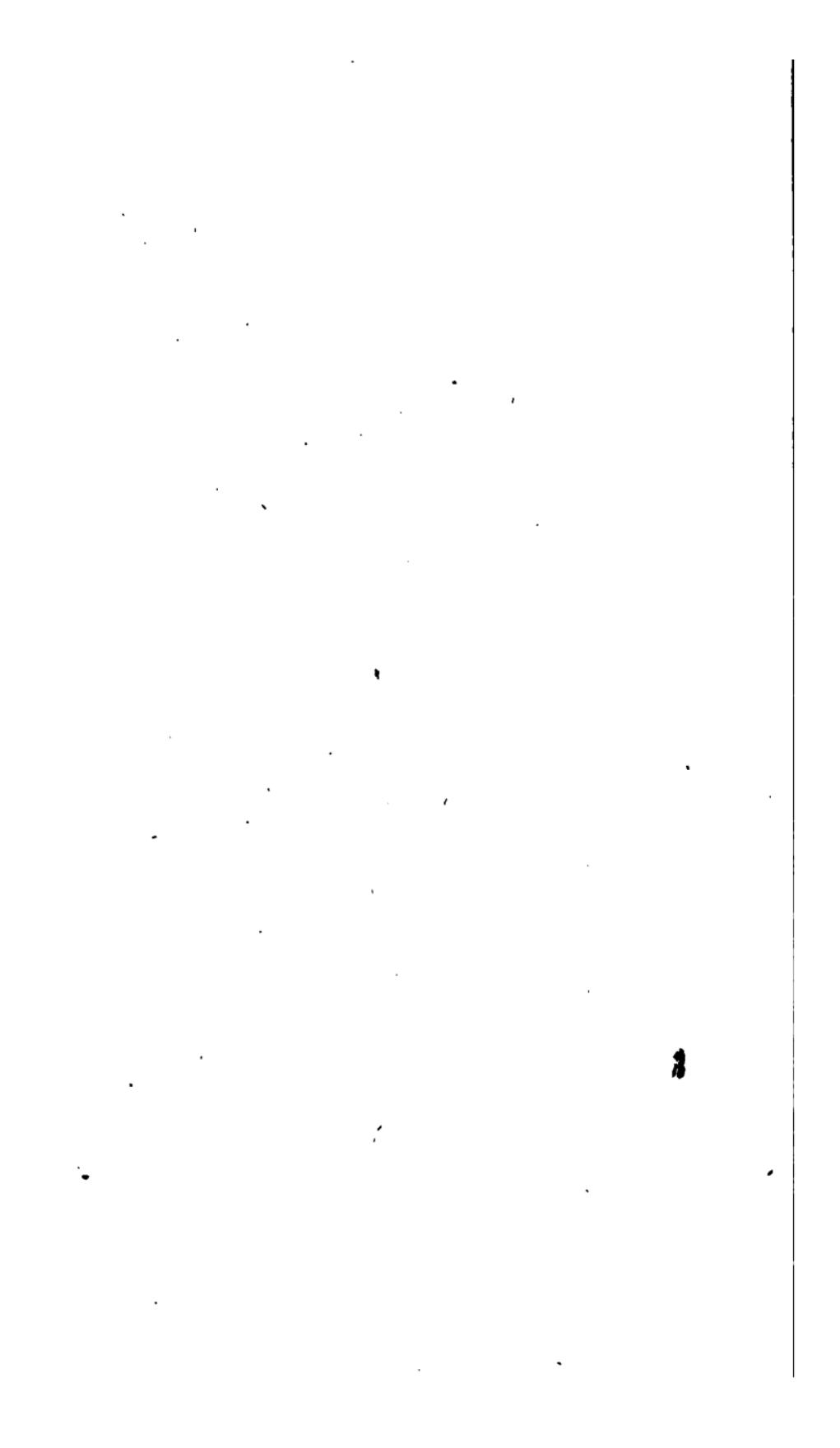
them; sweet listeners, and curious lovers of story-book lore; with fine ears worthy of more delicate phrasing, but content to hearken to the simple tale of the stranger-land, or the home one, when the moonbeams rayed in through the open window, and the sound of the rippling sea came with it, and the perfume of the salt sea-weed that often has thought and distance in its fragrance. Lord love them for their kind hearts and gentle feelings, and for their ears too,—quick as the nymph Echo's, only drawing in the sound to be set in the memory, not evaporated by the lips.

Ah, those were sweet evenings which we passed together on that bright shore! But what is its brightness to us now?—*only a recollection*; (what a volume might be written on these three words!) The gossips are scattered, north and south,—fate has so willed it; and now that I sit by my winter fire, and think of other listeners—unseen and unknown ones, I cannot, even with the remembrance of the charming indulgence which my former gossipings—sent out into the world without name, or friend, or paragraph—met with, in my heart, and the

hope of again finding the same, in my mind, think of my new adventure without anxiety.*

Indifferent health, and the stay-at-home life which it necessitates, have made me a scribbler. After the exercise of those affections in which nature has placed the best and purest source of our delights, I know of nothing that has to do with earth,—unless it be the aspect of the beautiful world, and the beautiful sky that covers it,—which soothes and gladdens the heart so much as a good book. But ramblers, who run after health from Dan to Beersheba, have seldom room for many, and thus fall into the way of inditing their own imaginings, for want of having those of others to dwell upon. To write is my dear enjoyment: would that to read what has often lured me out of the “pale cast of thought,” might be one to others;—but the word, I am well aware, claims too much—shall it be *amusement*?

* These Tales were written two or three years before the publication of the *Slight Reminiscences*, and now venture abroad, encouraged by the kind reception which the latter experienced.



JANET HAMILTON.

Nous sommes tous pleins d'idées accessoires.

Montesquieu.

Thy young and innocent heart,
How is it beating? Has it no regrets?

Rogers' Italy.

In the soft month of May, when the lilacs deepen in Portman Square, and green leaves make umbrellas in the supreme Grosvenor; when spring showers freshen the turf and keep down the dust in Hyde Park, and every balcony puts forth its rich exuberance of bud and flower, London is very bright and very beautiful. Splendid equipages, matchless horses, gallant cavaliers, and magnificent women meet the eye wherever it turns, and time is trotted, yawned or danced down, with incredible facility.

The life of a woman of fashion—if she be *in* fashion, (for it does not follow of course,) is a splendid delirium while the season lasts, and I

doubt much if the word spring carries more sunshine with it to the fancy of a poet, than to the ear of a high-bred beauty. But the images that its different significations usher in, have little to do with each other; in the country, *the spring* expresses merely the renewal of nature, the coming of daisies, the singing of birds, the bustle of insect life, the patterning of light rain, the knitting and unknitting of buds, and other simple things which homely natures love and welcome: but the *London Spring* means admiring eyes, bewildering discourse, enviable conquests, acknowledged triumphs, late slumbers, the toilette and its ministers, note-writing and receiving, a few chords struck on the harp, a duo with Rubini, a drawing retouched *conscientiously*, arrangements for the evening, indispensable calls, a picture-gallery, a jeweller's, a *modiste's*;—and then the park, and the equestrians, and the general buzz, and the particular whisper;—and the divine Kensington! with its beaux and its beauties, and its individual odour of trodden grass, that is so particularly fragrant and fashionable. No other grass has the same odour: try the freshest field ever dappled by daisies, and you will find its scent as vulgar as the tonquin-bean in compa-

rison. I know of nothing—nobody knows of any thing—like Kensington Gardens on a becoming day, when the air is favorable to beauty; when the soft blue, and the pale green, and the rose-colour, and the straw-colour, and all the delicious spring-tints illustrate the still more delicious figures that loiter in the shade, or shoot by in the sun, or broil on the hot wall, their pretty feet dangling half a yard from the ground, and their charming faces inclined condescendingly (too condescendingly perhaps) backwards towards the privileged who repose their pawing steeds at the other side of the fosse.

Kensington is the true ladies' field of the cloth of gold, it is all patrician; mauvais ton, or want of ton, is instantly detected, however it may be huddled up in beauty. The color of a glove, the texture of a shoe, an obtrusive flower, or an unsanctioned ribbon, betrays it as unequivocally to a practised eye, as the most vulgar exhibition of anxious restlessness or gaping curiosity.

At half-past six the gardens thin; and half an hour later only the quiet folks who dine early, and have old-fashioned fancies about sunsets and hay-cocks, are visible. When the press of exit comes,

I wou'd advise all stragglers to keep aloof from the narrow gates: those who lounge about such perilous premises, may happen to get a stray hit from some chance-directed missile, which neither the waters of Bareges or Bagneres, nor any other known specific for gun-shot wounds, may prove strong enough to cure.

Famous dinners—with *good people*, and gay people, and fine people, follow, at which the charming creatures appear in all the radiance of a fresh toilette; trifle with iced jelly, or green peas, each with a wrinkle and a drop of dew in it; turn the heads of lords and commons; talk politics with senators, art with artists, folly with boy-peers: and discuss modes, manners, *les idees vagues et les choses positives* with the young foreign diplomatists, who are passported by their high names and privileged profession into their bright society. Then comes the opera-box, where beauties are crowned queens for the time being; and Almack's charmed circle, where presidents have ears as fine as those of the half-immortal Comus; and the duke's fete, and the prince's concert, or the charming Lady ——'s soiree dansante, with waltz, galop, mazourka, and all their delightful involvements. These, and

the thousand other soft contrivances for disarming time which a true capital affords, absorb all the hours not forcibly claimed by inevitable sleep, to which beauties resign their charms, in the same hope with which the famous Duc de Richelieu yielded his wrinkles to the mollifying contact of a veal cutlet.

This is the sparkling side of the gem, the beautiful one ; it has its flaws, but the general effect is nothing dimmed by them. But there is an opaque side too, whose shade is never turned upon the fair exclusives of whom we have just been talking.

How little does a young lady of humble fortune and no town connexions, who lives with her mother, or her aunt, or her maiden cousin, in a small melancholy house in some dark and distant street, know of all that blazes and enchant in the far west. To her London is a vast prison, repudged from the nature which she loves, and her heart beats against its bars with the useless irritation of a poor caged bird.

Janet Hamilton was one of the many poor girls so situated. Accustomed to a charming home in the midst of woods and meadows, the dull perspective of R——Street, the closed blinds of the unfeatured houses that blocked up and darkened

the front view, and the melancholy garden, (I believe it called itself,) deep as a draw-well and black as night, behind, filled her mind with sadness, and her eyes sometimes with retrospective tears.

Her father,—the last of an ancient family, had entered life with fair prospects; an uncle, who had good government-intérest, had succeeded in procuring for him, almost before his age entitled him to promotion, a rather lucrative place, but it was not a sinecure, and condemned him for a considerable portion of the year to what he called the drudgery of office. He was not actually indolent, but his habits of occupation had been till then adopted voluntarily; and though few people had more good about them than he had, yet there was unfortunately an ingredient mixed up with his fine qualities, which often neutralized their effect; a something in his nature so repugnant to restraint, that as soon as any thing took the shape of an obligation, he became almost incapable of performing it. Add to this organic defect, literary habits, a passion for the arts, and an intense desire to visit foreign countries, and it may be easily supposed how ill the desk and its mechanical labors suited with the habits of a mind at once free, ideal,

negligent, and remarkable for the quality of mental shortsightedness, which prevented him from seeing the most obvious things, if but a few degrees removed from the "mind's eye."

It was vain to tell him that a career so fortunately begun might, if steadily pursued, lead to the highest honors,—he could never see so far: he felt the present restraint, but the calculation of future advantages never could be forced upon him. However, he worked on, because his situation enabled him to be of use to his father, who had nearly ruined himself by unsuccessful speculations, and to augment the enjoyments of a sister some years younger than himself, whom he tenderly loved.

But his durance did not last long: in the short space of six weeks, death deprived him of both his father and his uncle. A legacy of several thousand pounds, left him by the latter, enabled him to quit what he theatrically called his most abhorred condition: this he did as soon as possible, portioned his sister, married her to a clever and estimable man, and then set forward to realize the fond project of his heart.

He called himself a pilgrim, and though always carefully, and never singularly dressed, except

that he wore no cravat, and suffered his hair to curl a little wildly, yet he loved to talk of staff and scallop shell; and when he stood before the shrine of Saint Peter at Rome, absorbed in whispered converse with a very fair creature, he spoke of

“Savage antres;
And vast deserts wild,”

until her bright eyes filled with tears, and her dissuading voice sank into more eloquent silence.

But where he went I know not; whether to Epirus, Antioch, or Damascus; to the Bedouin deserts, or the high Ararat,—he used to speak of all: and would talk of the Gulf of Bussora, the silent valley of Jehosaphat, of the palms that grow about the fountains of Ispahan, and the veiled women who at the hour of sunset go down to gather the sacred blossoms of the lotus on the banks of the Euphrates, as if it had all been familiar to him.

He was long absent, but at length returned to England, and, strange to say—his easy yet ardent nature considered—alone, in cheerless singleness, sobered out of much of the enthusiasm which marked his character in the spring-time of life, grave, thoughtful, averse to society, and especially

to the society of women. None pleased him; one was bold, another insipid; there was always a want of sweetness, or delicacy, or mind, or softness, or an affectation of them, which was still worse. The mere accordance of features never attracted his attention, it was the poetry of expression that charmed his meditative fancy; and the look that embodied a gracious feeling, a lovely thought, he felt was beauty though it might not be called so. His sister ventured once or twice to question him playfully about the muffled houris of Grand Cairo, and the soft Fatimas of the Turkish harems; or to hazard a hint touching the magic effect of the Spanish basquina, or the dangerous transparency of the Venetian veil. But it would not do; he became serious, almost sad, and her true woman's tact soon taught her that she had, somehow or other, touched a string which jarred unpleasantly.

His mind seemed to have lost its purchase; all its natural and acquired riches lay heaped like pieces of machinery, to which the mechanical power had not yet given impulse or direction. His aspect was calm, even to indifference; but there was an under current of distracted thought, of deep-working restless feeling, that sometimes swelled

to the top, and eddied for an instant its smooth surface.

In the midst of reveries, increasing melancholy, and mental lassitude, he became acquainted in a very unromantic common-place way, with a young girl who had been bequeathed as a sort of legacy to a lady, a friend of his sister's. She was the sole offspring of a thoughtless and unfortunate marriage: her father, an officer of birth, had been abandoned by his family, and had fallen a victim to climate in some cheap land of pestilence and exile. Her mother had died soon after of a broken heart: and the only friend whose affection had followed this unfortunate pair down to the last page of their mournful story, found herself residuary legatee to the sole wealth they had left behind them,—a gentle girl, who had just completed her fifteenth year when Hamilton first saw her, hemming long strips of muslin behind the closed blind of her protectress's parlor-window.

She was pretty and innocent, with kind blue eyes, a soft complexion, and expression of sense and sweetness that gave something of character to her childish countenance. She had no accomplishments, had read little, but was (at least so said her friend,) a sage little manager, and an excellent nurse.

There was something graceful in her naivete, tender in her shyness, and very sweet in her smile ; but she was not striking, and her general appearance was that of a timid school-girl.

Such as she was, Hamilton had no sooner become a visitor at the house of her protectress, than he neglected all other society. Whether it was that he found repose in her calm simplicity from the danger of renewed excitement, or that her turn of mind pleased him, or that dreading to be again the victim of those desolating emotions which had embittered the fairest portion of his existence, he wished to place her gentle image as a shield between himself and his passions, I know not ; but in three months after their first acquaintance he married her to the astonishment of all who knew any thing of his story.

“Such a man as Mr. Hamilton!” exclaimed one, “who has been every where, who has seen all the beauties of all the courts in Europe: What attractions could he have discovered in little Miss Wilmot?”

“Little Miss Wilmot!” echoed another ; “what —the child in the striped frock? You surprise me,—how strange! such a prodigiously handsome man as Mr. Hamilton to throw himself away so

unaccountably ; he who, when at Madrid, might have carried off from a host of competitors that exquisite creature the bellissima Trastamara, who poisoned her husband in a sorbet a month after the nuptials."

"There, indeed, he had a loss," said a third dryly. "But without taking up with one of your love-and-murder donas, he might have done somewhat better than this at home ; for I know where he could have had forty thousand pounds and an uncommonly nice girl too,—fine growth, famous stepper, and an eye !—But it is always so with your desperate gallants ; nothing too simple or too ignorant for them when they turn towards matrimony."

Thus talked the gossips ; but Hamilton was not a man to be talked in or out of any thing ; he had been too long away from home, and had left it too early in life to have any very intimate friend ; and to the opinions of mere acquaintances, he had never been in the habit of attaching any value. The *on-dit* of a limited circle,—that sometimes salutary bugbear of a feeble or perverse mind, and often bane of high intention,—never appeared to him worth attending to. He quitted London, and settled with his gentle bride in a kind of farm-house cottage on

the edge of a rough common, full of wild hollows, overhung with the flaring blossoms of the yellow furze and the dull purple berry of the juniper. This common was not a downright goose-green, though geese sometimes fed upon it; but rather a wild brake, helped out in its coloring by heaths and mosses, and by the rich brown hue of the earth that showed itself in many wild and winding tracks, and ragged bits that worked out amidst the fresh vegetation. A gipsy-forest skirted the common at one side, and many a fire had blazed there under the greenwood tree, and lean donkey mumbled the bark of its old oaks, or rolled on the short turf beneath them. Nor were rural accessories ever wanting; the wood-cutter's cart, or the smoke of the charcoal-burner's fire, or the bustle of children gathering sticks, or shaking down acorns, or driving their cows to a shaded pool that glistened on the edge of the wood were always giving fresh touches of life to the simple picture.

On the other side, the quiet village with its modest spire and green church-yard, shaded by the full open foliage of three fine elms, spread itself out cheerfully, with that air of chimney-corner comfort which belongs essentially to an English village of the downright rustic kind. Not a parlor-windowed village, where the maiden gentlewomen still knot

fringe, and drink weak tea, and play penny whist, and mark their game with four bright *coins*, or four smooth kidney-beans ; where the scarlet geranium trails its fine-drawn stalks against the cold bay-window, screening the colder figure that sits behind it, and every thing looks raw, even when the sun shines ; nor yet the modern row of almshouse-looking cottages standing up at either side of the high road, each with its briery stripe of neglected garden, which a stout man could trample into mud in five minutes ; but a village of farm-houses, and farm-yards, and snug cottages, scattered about in green lanes and corn-fields, with daisied meadows, and orchards, and blooming gardens about them, and a vine, a woodbine, or a pear-tree covering their south wall. Such was the village that turned its pleasant features towards Hamilton's dwelling ; and beyond it a cheerful country of corn-fields and hedge-rows, with a soft broken distance, closed the scene.

I honor the inventors and utilizers of the steam-engine, and respect its almost miraculous powers ; but I hope they never may be exercised to accelerate the movement of the plough, or to supersede the picturesque labors of the sober horse, or plodding oxen, whose sweet breath I have sometimes fancied I scented, mixing with the healthy odor of the

freshly broken-up earth, at a distance far beyond the reach of its suave perfume. When steam-directed ploughs are seen working through the stubbles, deadening the fresh aspect of nature by curling volumes of black town-like smoke, we may take a sponge and blot out that pleasant country scene, to which the ploughshare gives just the right life-tint, from our cheerful catalogue of rustic images.

It happened, that Hamilton and his "late espoused" took possession of their new dwelling in the season of the corn-harvest, when the sound of the flail issued from every barn, and the good old plough was leisurely tracing deep furrows in the red earth. The sound and sight of long-forgotten things seemed to awaken a new mind within him,—the mind of memory: he had almost forgotten home and the scenes of early life, but now they came upon him with the freshness of a morning dream.

There is nothing so identical as the memory of youth; nothing that has so much truth, or such constant sunshine in it. If we had troubles then, succeeding ones have made them seem almost like joys; when we look back, how the sports of childhood, the idle projects, the hearty mirth,—broad and contagious, born neither of wit or humor, but

of sheer light-heartedness, come before us, and all dancingly, as if there had never been vexation or disappointment mixed up with them. Every trim grass-plat recalled to Hamilton's mind the play-ground of his school-house, and every wild copse and scrubby apple-tree his holiday larcenies. Even out of the perfume of flowers grew pages of his boyhood's history ; he never could pass by some lavender-bushes, that half choked up the wicket of his garden, without thinking of his mother, who had often taken him with her to hold her basket, while she carefully clipped off the grey blossoms from a similar tuft in her favorite flower-knot. And for the sake of her dear memory he would never let them be touched ; but preferred blocking up the wicket, and breaking out another in a less convenient place.

His sweet companion entered into all his feelings, and shared them fully. Her childhood seemed to her like a sorrowful dream, from which she had been awakened into life and consciousness by the voice of love. She had never lived in the country, but its image was in her heart ; and as its lineaments were gradually developed, she felt as if she looked upon well-known objects like those who, in perusing the works of a great writer, find thoughts struck out which

suddenly appear to have been long familiar to their minds, but which had not until that moment found a channel of utterance.

Their cottage became a paradise, and the “lone Cyclades,” the palmy Egypt, Medina, Mecca, and the high Olympus, were all forgotten; and he who had wandered in foreign lands until the remembrance of his own had seemed obliterated, suddenly felt the love of home spring up in his heart with all the vigor of a new-born passion. Every scene was fair, every homely sound touching, every old-fashioned country-custom sage, respectable, pleasant, or affectionate; even the climate came in for indulgence, and he would praise our lingering twilight at the expense of the protracted brightness and sudden extinction of an eastern day. The common air had incense in it, the common nature poetry; and often in the grey of the morning he would open his casement to hear the cock crow, for he delighted in its shrill trumpet, with its bright self-sufficient tone and insolence of enjoyment. It was a better pastoral, he used to say, than Pope or Shenstone, or even Virgil or Theocritus, had ever written.

I scarcely know why I dwell so long on those days of quiet happiness, for they have little to do

with my story. I suppose, because the subject pleases me, though it will probably interest few others. Had I time, I should like to make all those who would listen, in love with the little girl in the striped frock, and to describe how beautifully both her mind and person were developed by the new sentiment of happiness, and the consciousness of being an object of interest and of love; how all the delightful qualities, which the exercised eye of Hamilton had discovered in their germ, had expanded into perfectness, and what a sweet and lovely flower had blown out from the bud of (as some thought) little promise:—but I must go on.

I love biography, and yet the conclusion always affects me painfully. When I have run along gaily, happily, anxiously, with a fine and endowed spirit through the mazes—thorny or flowery—of life, I cannot follow it unmoved in its pale decline to the gradual, solemn close. Perhaps in the midst of happiness, in the moment of triumph, in the fulness of mental power,—or worse, before that power, or the beautiful feelings that go in alliance with it, have been rightly appreciated or the injustice of the world redressed, comes the last scene; and the warm heart, the fervid mind with all its yet undrawn-upon resources, all that it had to tell, are gone for ever!

They went together,—this fond and faithful pair,—of the same malady ; he caught it first, and she in her close attendance at his bedside. The happiest of unions was thus dissolved, and the heart which was strong in love, lay mouldering beside that kindred one, on whose withered hopes it had poured the fresh dew of tenderness, causing them to spring forth anew, though scathed by sorrow down to the very root.

—II.—

Poor Hamilton was scarcely laid in the grave, when a banker, in whose hands he had placed a considerable part of his fortune for the purpose of investment, failed ; and instead of the affluence which he had left behind him, a very humble modicum became the portion of his only child.

Janet was scarcely seventeen when her aunt, the sole relative whom she knew of on earth, drew her from the home which “was left unto her desolate.” The beloved sister of her father was now a widow, and in moderate, though not mean circumstances ; she had no children, and received her brother’s orphan with tenderness and joy.

Mrs. Brudenel’s strong resemblance to her brother was a key to Janet’s heart ; it opened at once

to receive her maternal embrace. Like the Arabian earth, she was not the rose, but she had dwelt with it; and when on seeing Janet she exclaimed, "My dearest child!" it seemed as if the voice of one in heaven had spoken to comfort her.

And this impression never was effaced; it was the sound of her father's voice, and it came upon her ear like the memory of happy days. Mrs. Brudenel was a kind and estimable woman; few had more agreeable qualities, none a more cheerful temper or a warmer heart. In youth she had been deemed strikingly handsome, and in middle age still retained the charm of a pleasant and varying, rather than marked expression, a well-bred air, and a certain naivete that gave a character of originality, of a very happy and engaging kind, both to her person and manners. She had married (not so much from what is called liking, as because her brother's wandering propensities threatened to leave her, sooner or later, alone in the world) an excellent man, whom she sincerely respected, and who merited, and at length gained her entire affection. He knew the innocence of her mind and the strength of her principles, and indulged her cheerful and enjoying disposition to an extent, that might have been dangerous to a less pure and candid nature. She

was happy and grateful, and he content to see her so. In his last long illness, she watched him with an unfailing and judiciously exercised tenderness, that made the closing hours of his life seem almost the happiest ; he left her all that he possessed—a respectable competency, and was sincerely regretted by one who, though not of a passionate, or perhaps acutely sensitive nature, cherished his memory with real affection, and always spoke of his kindness and virtues with gratitude and feeling.

Two thirds of Mrs. Brudenel's life had been passed in London, and she sincerely believed that even a lodging in Piccadilly, or Pall Mall, was preferable to the finest isolated park in England. Not that she was a person of an inelegant organization ; on the contrary, she possessed a considerable share of delicacy both of mind and manners ; but her habits were town habits,—not those of absolute high life, which are the same in London, Paris, Petersburgh, and Vienna, but those identified with London itself. Her sphere of existence was one which allowed much liberty of action ; for though, as the wife of a distinguished barrister, she had moved in a circle of great respectability, yet she had not lived within the actual pale of high society, and had from taste

adopted habits of ease, rather than those of etiquette. She had no passion for the country, and had the courage to say so; loved flowers, but was content to cherish them in her balcony, or admire them at Colville's; was fond of the shade and verdure of a fine tree, but did not despise the "mincing Dryades" of the adjoining square; thought Roehampton savage, and Twickenham rather lonely, and found Hyde Park a sufficient paradise. Plays were her dear delight; but she was not scrupulous about going to a public box, or making one of a quiet party to the pit of the Opera house. Though accustomed to an equipage, she resigned herself philosophically to a hackney-coach; rather liked walking in the streets when the weather was fine, and was, moreover, addicted to looking in at shop-windows.

For this last practice I entreat indulgence; indeed, I am so sensible of its plebian character, that I should not have dared to name it, had I not known it to be also one of the fancies of a person, whose fine taste and intellectual superiority may be allowed to sanction a propensity somewhat, perhaps, undignified.

Mrs. Brudenel resided in a small house in R—— Street, and the front drawing-room, in

which she habitually sat, revelled in one of those enlivening views of which I have already spoken. An elderly lady lived in the opposite house, and behind her perforated brick wall no sign of life was ever visible. Long canvass blinds preserved the pale blue lining of the drawing-room suit of chintz-pattern calicot from the attacks of the unfrequent Phœbus, (whose visits, even in his especial visiting season, were little more than watery gleams dancing faintly on the upper story,) and green ones, on the screw principle, obscured the parlor-windows to a certain height, where they were met by two breadths of scarlet moreen gently dissevered and drawn aside in everlasting plaits, never to be deranged out of the professional jerk conferred on them by the finger and thumb of the upholsterer.

Four reluctant bulbous roots in blue glasses were once placed by a half-revealed hand on the outside of one of these same parlour-windows, but soon withdrawn, probably to the warmer atmosphere of the chimney-piece; and when the day was very sultry, a sash was sometimes gently raised to the height of the blind, or perhaps an inch above it. The lady (like many other solitary ladies in London) had few, or rather no visitors;

and the ring of the milkman, or the ignoble cry of "beer," with the apparition of the maid-servant letting herself in with a huge key, or the pinched, puritanical foot-boy (indentured by his mother at low wages till his growth came) hailing the rapid muffin-man, or stealing round the corner to confab with a crony, were the only external signs of life or habitation which her melancholy premises ever exhibited.

It was long before poor Janet's profound affliction allowed her to notice indifferent objects; but as spring advanced, and the air sometimes tempted her for a moment to the half-shaded window, she could not help feeling what a dismal change she had made from her wild wood-walks and sunny corn-fields, from watching in the same sweet season the buds as they swelled and deepened, and opening the ivied casement to respire the first breath of morning, or the sweet evening air after a light prolific shower, to the gloom of R— Street, the starved crocus and meagre hyacinth of her aunt's balcony, and the sullen trickle of rain converted into mire as it streamed off the black roofs, dislodging the poor sooty sparrows who had established themselves in and about the chimneys. But with these thoughts came others,

whose hold was deeper on her heart; and fields and flowers, and all the soft apparel of nature, were soon forgotten in the recollection of those with whom she had enjoyed their delights, and who slept together under the old elms in the green church-yard.

Most women who have once possessed beauty, and are not soured by its loss, love to see the undocked entail pass into the right line; it is like a boil in Medea's kettle, or a kind of transfusing process, by which the first *self* is merged into a second, and often with so perfect and undiluted a flow of interest and feeling, that each is more acutely active, more sensitively alive, than it had ever been in its first and more individual tenement. Janet's beauty gratified her aunt's personal vanity, and she watched its effect on others with a sort of anxiety which her light and careless spirit had never allowed her to feel on her own account. But if she was proud of her niece's loveliness, it must in justice be said, that she was still more touched and delighted by her unaffected simplicity, and the charm, feeling, and intelligence of her conversation; it was like talking with a new heart, and a beautiful one, through the medium of words, not picked out as fitting ones, but put together, almost

created, by its own emotions. Her social nature had often felt, and severely, the painfulness of a solitary life, deprived of all particular interest or excitement, and she rejoiced to find this gentle heart warming to her own, and replying to its affectionate language.

But it was not enough to possess this bird of paradise, it was essential to her happiness that it should be seen by others; she felt the absolute necessity of participation, and like the possessor of an undoubted Raphael, who burns to mark the open proofs of its authenticity in the jealousy of others, was not content with the solitary sentiment of admiration confined to her own breast, but would fain, under one pretext or another, call in all the world to see her treasure, and envy her its monopoly. Her idea was, that to possess beauty was useless if there was no one to admire it, and she would quote Pope, Gray, and Waller, very aptly, to support the case in point.

“It is so seldom,” she said, “one sees such a girl as Janet, that it seems quite a sin to shut her up as if she had a mouse on her cheek, or another head looking over her shoulder in Siamese sisterhood; but she is so naturally beautiful, and so beautifully natural—”

"Quite a wild rose," interrupted a lady on the verge, who affected sentiment.

"What a queen she would make!" exclaimed another, whose ideas were more mundane.

"Such an expression of candour and sweetness!" observed an elderly gentleman, much looked up to in Mrs. Brudenel's circle.

"And such a smile!" subjoined a young one, who committed rhymes; "breaking with a bright scattered light through the melancholy that overshadows her countenance, like a moonbeam on the face of the waters."

Every one thought the simile charming; and one of the party, who was just going to say that it was pretty to see Janet looking when she smiled like a truant child laughing through its wet eyelashes, drew in her words, half ashamed of such a commonplace idea, and swallowed them with a hem.

But how to produce this phenomenon was the question. Mrs. Brudenel's circle had become extremely limited since the death of her husband and the consequent diminution of her income, and the sober card-party, or work-bag convention, to which she was now restricted, could not be either interesting or advantageous to Janet. Middling balls were worse; for there one made acquaint-

tance with indifferent—that is to say, unfashionable men. Theatres (she now discovered) were a vulgar medium of display; and the park an untenable one, for so attractive a person as her niece, without an equipage. In short, after a vast deal of reflection, from which nothing was elicited, she began to see that the means of achieving what she desired were not within her power; and being one of those happy people who always turn out the bright side of the canvass, soon forgot in Janet's society the absolute necessity she had believed herself under of showing her off; while Janet, who had never heard of the exhibiting system, felt happy at finding herself once more the object of affection, and in possession of leisure which she had been taught to value, and employ delightfully.

—III.—

Meanwhile spring advanced; and one day, when the sun looked out invitingly, Mrs. Brudenel, forgetting her former objections, proposed a stroll in the park, to which Janet, who had never been there, readily assented. The day was bright, the

park fresh as a May garland, the Serpentine like a fair mirror, just rippled by the track of the stately swans, who followed the alluring crumbs held out to them from the shore, as I have seen their effigy in turnip (unconscious bearer of a needle) sail after the load-stone that was gently trailed along before it.

The leaves were not yet quite enough expanded, or the air sufficiently warm for Kensington Gardens; so the walk along the edge of the Serpentine was on that day the field of action. Mrs. Brudenel and Janet sat down on a bench near to the brilliant promenade; and the latter, to whom the scene had not only its own charms, but also those of novelty, remarked upon whatever attracted her attention with a native felicity of expression, that greatly amused and delighted her friend. At every moment fresh groupes passed; fair creatures and their pretenders, and as frail creatures who had no pretenders; some bowing smilingly to the nonchalant nod of passing dandies, others gliding by in the dignity of assumed or real indifference; some content with the effect of their charms, and other sighing over the hopes awakened by pointed attentions at the Opera the night before, and frustrated by a blank look over at the next meeting.

Janet was at first exceedingly amused. The scene

was bright, the ladies beautiful ; every one seemed gay, and surrounded by friends : and poor Janet had no sooner observed this happy clanship, than it struck sorrowfully upon her mind that she was herself a stranger,—not only in the park, but every where ! and, but for her kind aunt, alone in the universe. When gaiety is not contagious, it is oppressive ; she felt it so, and was pleased when Mrs. Brudenel proposed their returning home.

Howard Dudley was not a park man ; but he happened to be there on that day, and to have seen Janet as she sat forgetting herself and admiring others, not quite (he thought) so worthy of a admiration. Dudley was a supremely fashionable person, and, independent of his fashion, a distinguished one ; spoke eloquently in the House, and delightfully out of it ; had written a volume of prose, which the leading Reviews had praised, and another of rhymes, which friendly critics declared to be poetry. Besides all this, he was particularly handsome, without being at all what is called a male beauty ; was known to have done some generous things, and some valorous ones—and both unvauntingly ; and had the purest taste in dress, the most perfect ton', and the most provoking insensibility of any man about town. The last quality was in itself almost enough to account for the in-

fluence which his opinion exercised over every thing legitimately fine and fashionable. All that was most noble, lovely, and (to others) disdainful, desired and sought for the fiat of Dudley's approbation :—scarcely any one obtained it. A monosyllable of languid acquiescence when another praised, a nod that was not absolutely disapproving, was caught at and registered as compliment, a thing to grow conceited on, when nothing more decisive could be obtained.

Lady Lucy Bellenden had just returned from Spain, where she had accompanied her husband on a diplomatic mission, and made her rentree at a bal costume at——House in an Andalusian dance of rather a marked character. It was an experiment, and opinions were decidedly against it: grave ones drew up, gay ones looked doubtfully ; and even those who had flattered and praised her ladyship into the folly, contrived to make their rapturous admiration more offensive than gratifying. In short, she was in a minority, which on such an occasion is a defeat, and though very pretty and not very timid, was beginning to feel pitifully uncomfortable: when Dudley, taking up a book that lay on a table near to him, traced the following lines with a pencil on a blank leaf, and left them to be devoured by the curious :—

To the bright Peri,
Whom men call "the Lady Lucy."

Beautiful, natural, noble, and young,
No fairer by better bards ever was sung;
If Seville such feather'd feet boastis as thine are,
I dub it of cities the eminent star.

Not its own Guadalquivir more gracefully flows,
Nor its own summer moonshine a purer ray throws
Than thy step, as it swimmingly glides o'er the floor,
Than thine eyes, as they turn from the eyes that adore.

Dance on, lovely lady, and may thy dance be
A type of thy life,—gracious, radiant,—but free
From the vexings, and crossings, and murmurs of those
Who, being the nightshade, would fain be the rose.

The verses were indifferent, but the effect was decisive. In a moment the tables were turned, and Lady Lucy took immediate rank as "Cynthia of the minute." Her triumph was, however, not altogether unalloyed. Admiration had not motived Dudley's impromptu ; it was a mere act of good nature, and the adorer, on whom she had too prematurely counted, relapsed into a mere bowing acquaintance.

Dudley was blaze'd on the chapter of beauty. He had seen so many handsome faces appear, attract; fatigue, and vanish, that he began to look upon them with a sort of critical indifference ; analyzing every new one as if it were a mineral water, and foretelling the duration of its influence with cold

but unerring sagacity. If Janet had been merely beautiful, she might have passed with a simple note of approbation; but she was more than that. The habitual expression of her countenance was soft and thoughtful, but not always thoughtful; a look, a word, would sometimes change its sweet seriousness into an arch smile, or a flash of bright and earnest joy, all the more charming for being unexpected.

No one ever blushed as she did. Her living roses were like the language of flowers: all-beautiful words might be read in their shifting tints,—truth, hope, joy, affection, tenderness, belief, modesty; sometimes disdain, but never anger. Her eyes were full of light and innocence,—eyes of another world, Dudley thought, but could not tell whether they were brown or blue, though he had looked long on them. About the eyelashes there could be no doubt; the long black eyelashes gently turned up at the points,—a childish beauty which they had retained from infancy, and which became the innocent character of her countenance. Nothing could have made a *mode* of Janet, neither could any thing have deprived her of a certain noble and gracious air that individualized her appearance. It was said by a person who had studied the character of her beauty, that she looked like

one who had never been taught any thing, but whose ideas had come to her by the intercourse of angels.

All this, and more, had been observed by Dudley, as he passed and repassed, or reclined upon a bench at a modest distance from the one which Janet and her aunt occupied. The former had not observed him ; but Mrs. Brudenel, whose eyes, though not so bright, were far more observant, had remarked his earnest and persevering gaze. A stare is in general an offensive expression of admiration, but the skilful Dudley had contrived to make it flattering, and even respectful. It was not an ordinary stare, vulgarly compounded of insolence and curiosity ; but a look that shunned encounter, and sought to delight itself without distressing the object of its attention.

As they walked homewards, Mrs. Brudenel observed that Dudley followed at a distance. I do not know how she contrived to find this out, for she was certainly far too discreet, and too sensible of the dignity of her functions as chaperon to a beauty, to have turned her head round ; but the fact is that she did see him. This secret of double sight is only possessed by women, who can see many things without looking at them. But it was natural that so

handsome a person as Janet should attract observation; and Mrs. Brudenel, who was not aware how exquisitely analytic was the taste of the person attracted, paid little attention to the circumstance.

But the next day, and again the next, the same distinguished figure was seen on horseback slowly passing down R—Street; and on the following Sunday, Mrs. Brudenel and Janet had scarcely taken their seats in the sober corner of a narrow pew in the neighboring chapel, when Dudley appeared advancing up the aisle preceded by the officious pew-opener, who with a receipt-in-full countenance let him into the one exactly opposite.

Every eye in the vicinity was immediately turned upon the stranger,—strangers so rarely visited R—chapel; indeed, why should they? There was no singing no popular preacher, no painted glass,—nothing but the children whistling through their teeth, and old Mr. Aylwood sermonizing through his nose. Then a person so evidently of high fashion, so different from the young men of the quarter who came there in Sunday suits, shining like calimanco,—what could it mean?

Two or three young ladies, who had keys to the square and paraded there daily, had ineffable

imaginings ; and the daughter of an oil-and-pickle vender, whose beauty had made a noise in [the parish and turned the head of a sentimental shopman, who from worshipping her as she flounced like a nymph of quality through her father's shop, disdaining the contact of muscatels and malagas, had passed into rhymes, and from thence into moonstruck melancholy, was observed to draw off her glove, and exhibit her ringed fingers in the direction of the stranger's pew with notable assiduity. The noise made by the pew-opener caused Janet to look up ; and as she did so, her eyes met those of Dudley for the first time. They were instantly withdrawn,—I believe with a blush ; but that she herself denied, when Mrs. Brudenel playfully charged her with it.

A month after this Dudley was a visitor at Mrs. Brudenel's ; and in another month, *l'ami de la maison*. "A delightful creature," she used to say, "so very natural, so charmingly unaffected ;" and would add, "It is quite wonderful how a person so influential, so looked up to in the world of fashion, can have preserved such freshness of heart and feeling," and her remarks were just. To the world he appeared *fine*, thoughtless, indifferent ; but in the society of his new friends, the rich material of his mind seemed to unfold as

flowers do when they feel the influence of a congenial atmosphere. In the midst of his careless gossip, his most undressed chat, the stores of his various and extensive knowledge seemed to run over unknowingly, freshening and enriching the dryest and least prolific subject. Often touches of thought and feeling came, like those mysterious shadows that sometimes spread rapidly over the face of the waters when no cloud appears in the heavens to account for the passing darkness. Nor was this unexpected shading the least engaging charm of his conversation; perhaps it was the one which in familiar intercourse delighted the most. His careless brilliancy was scattered as a common partage; but his deeper feelings were folded up in his heart, to be brought forth only by the call of kindred spirits, who felt the distinction as one which made them sharers in his more intimate feelings.

Mrs. Brudenel remained the summer in town. She had no country-house, and both aunt and niece preferred the evening quiet of Kensington Gardens and the parks, a row on the river, a day at Richmond, or a ramble amongst the gipsies at Norwood, where the Dryades have still a summer encampment, to the crowd, and heat, and vulgar bustle of a sea-side establishment within five hours'

drive or sail of London, in the dog-days. Farther distances were unattainable : so Janet filled her balcony with roses, twined jessamine round the trellis of the small verandah, cultivated carnations, and sent the odor of mignonette and garden violets all over the house. Dudley was entirely of their opinion as to the good sense and good taste of remaining in town ; and though embowered villas and lordly castles were at his command or option, suddenly discovered that the resources of London were inexhaustible, and the air, from the constant watering of the streets, infinitely cooler as well as more invigorating, than that of the country. Mrs. Brudenel's eyes smiled when she heard this, though she tried to look believably. She had long been aware of the interest which motivated Dudley's stay, and was pleased to see admiration deepening into a more puissant sentiment, for he was all that she could wish (and her wishes were not moderate) for Janet ; she had watched the progress of what she could no longer doubt was a real attachment. Dudley's manner to Janet, so delicately respectful, so evidently yet silently tender, seemed to her more indicative of truth than a thousand protestations. She had read the deep but gentle feeling that replied to its silent language in Janet's increased seriousness, and waited the avowal which

seemed to tremble on Dudley's lips with as much tranquility as could be expected from so lively a nature.

—IV.—

"How dull we are without Mr. Dudley," said Mrs. Brudenel one morning as she sat sewing tassels on a purse, while Janet arranged some fresh flowers in a vase beside her. Janet said nothing. "It is three days since we have seen him," continued her aunt; "I hope he has not forgotten us."

"Forgotten us? O no!" said Janet.

"Why, my love, do you think it impossible?"

"Perhaps not impossible, but very unlikely; he seemed so fond of your society, so happy in it, as if he wished for nothing more."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Brudenel, smiling archly, "he certainly admires me prodigiously, that is sufficiently obvious; and I think, considering how very fine he is, and how very simple you are, tolerates your rusticities with great good-nature."

Janet blushed her brightest red, smiled, broke the head of her finest rose, threw some wet stalks on a favorite sketch, and went on blushing and blun-

dering till a knock at the door took off Mrs. Brudenel's attention.

"It is Dudley's knock," she said. "Now we shall hear what excuse my infidel will imagine." Then, with one of her droll airs, "Do I look in beauty to-day, love? Is my cap advantageous? Shall I seem indifferent, or offended? Neither, I think; I shall be tender. 'Tenderness, (as Lady Wishfort says,) becomes me best,—a sort of dyingness; my niece affects it, but she wants features.' But you, dearest, must rub your cheeks to your roses; you look as mealy as the ghost in Hamlet. Go, love, bring me a handkerchief, an embroidered one, mind, in case of tears."

At this moment Dudley's step was heard ascending the stairs, and Janet, thankful for her aunt's considerate commission, escaped by one door a moment before he entered at the other.

Thus did gaiety prelude an interview which consigned more than one heart to sorrow. Dudley had come to bid adieu! A hasty mission to Dresden,—a command that admitted neither of refusal or delay,—only two days allowed for preparation, and that night he was to quit London, to be absent perhaps many months; at all events the period was indefinite. There was no distant hope of return dwelt upon, no allusion to the future, no avowal of

attachment, no claim to be remembered ; but his movements were agitated, his look desponding, and the marks of a strong internal struggle were expressed in the abrupt and tremulous sound of his voice. He seemed like an actor who had undertaken an inferior part, and hesitated whether to play it on to the end, or throw it off boldly.

At length it was all over ; and Dudley had crossed the street for the last time, and was out of sight. Janet still leaned against the window, looking towards the spot where he had vanished, and Mrs. Brudenel had returned to her purse tassels, from which it may be supposed her thoughts were far away.

Perhaps she was the most unhappy of the two, for she knew the world, had studied human nature, and marked the uneven current of man's love. She saw in the sudden absence, unsostened by avowal or pledge, the struggles of a mind working to disengage itself from the chains which were fastening round it, and felt that he who had strength enough to break them asunder, and voluntarily throw off the bondage which true lovers prize would never again risk the danger of seeing her whose presence he had found so perilous. He was gone, then—and gone for ever ! and her warm heart filled with indignation when she recollect ed

his long-continued and most unjustifiable attentions, and how he had trifled with, perhaps destroyed, Janet's happiness from a light feeling of casual preference,—or worse, a culpable and unfeeling vanity.

It is true that Dudley had never mentioned the word love; but was his passion less evident because unavowed? O no! and that reserve, which Janet attributed to delicacy, seemed to her aunt only a kind of scape-goat by which the point of honor might get out of the scrape with unruined withers.

Other thoughts came later, and when the first warm feelings of anger and indignation had somewhat subsided, she reviewed the matter more calmly; and feeling that Janet was not calculated to inspire a transient preference, or Dudley to feel one for such an object; that he was (great as had been his fault) as much superior to the base calculations of a profligate vanity, as she was raised by the purity and dignity of her nature above the risk of becoming its victim, concluded that—not want of fortune, for Dudley's mind was obviously exempt from sordid feeling,—but want of fashion had been the cause of his defection: and while thoroughly despising, she began to pity a man who could submit a mind, gifted as his was, to be padlocked into narrowness, cramped in its free and honorable

expansion by that inexorable limit, the apparently slight, but in reality stronger than strong barrier of fashion, which like a rope of grass, though woven of the most fragile materials receives from the mode of its formation a degree of solidity by which it is enabled to retain the voluminous mass within its assigned boundary.

In short, Mrs. Brudenel discovered that *exclusives*, who lead in the perfumed atmosphere of fashion, who are necessarily “*pleins d’idees accessoires*,” do not carry their serious intentions into R— Street; that however a man of Dudley’s calibre may admire a Miss Hamilton, whom nobody knows, who goes about on foot, and lives under the protection of a lawyer’s widow, yet to think seriously of her would be too ridiculous. What would the world say?—the world! the committee of Almack’s! Better meet the bayonets of Prince Frederick’s Mohawks, or the tender mercies of the melancholy Miguel.

But Janet knew not this; she, poor girl, still believed in masks which her more experienced friend discovered were only very smooth vellum skilfully painted. The idea of Dudley’s eternal absence never once crossed her mind. The sadness of her heart seemed to certify to his; the hope of his return to be as proof that he desired it also; for

it seemed to her that minds, so much in accordance as theirs were, must think, and feel, and hope together. She knew that Dudley loved her, though he had never told her so ; she had no doubt of his fidelity, for she never thought of separating his image from that of truth, of honor, of high feeling. Had any one said to her, ‘Dudley has forgotten you,’ she would have smiled as incredulously as if she had been told that the Emperor of China had sent her a present of caravan tea and costly birds’ nests. She knew nothing of deceit, and as little of the exactions of fashion ; and though the least confident of human beings, scarcely knowing and never remembering that she possessed any attractions, yet she still felt that Dudley had preferred her to all others ; and in her utter ignorance of the world, of the disadvantage of living in R—— Street, of knowing nobody, I really believe that (strange as such ignorance may seem) the idea of the immense gulf which fashion had placed between them never once occurred to her.

But time ripens minds, and fears, and sorrows ; certainty gives way to doubt, and doubt again becomes certainty,—but of another kind. A year had gone by, and Janet was a changed creature ; the past was written in her heart, and seemed to

have left no place for the future,—the once beautiful future! that shone out and faded like love's promises.

—V.—

"I wonder, my dear Mrs. Brudenel," said a meddling friend, "that you keep Miss Hamilton in town. The air of London evidently disagrees with her; she has quite lost her roses."

"I am sorry to say," said another, who piqued herself on speaking her mind, "that she alters sadly. No eclat now; but your country beauties don't do here. Our town belles are inured to a town life; while your rustic divinities whiten into spermaceti in a season. I really quite feel for her."

"Pray do not distress yourself, my dear madam," returned Mrs. Brudenel impatiently; "at nineteen roses come back of themselves. Later in life, perhaps, fears and precautions become reasonable; but—" Here her good-nature interfered, and finding herself vexed and growing personal, she stopped short, and abruptly changed the conversation.

But it dwelt heavily on her mind, and self re-

proof came with it. She had seen, and with sorrow, the alteration in Janet's appearance ; yet that the air of London, the purest air (as she firmly believed) in the world,—a restorative in itself, could have any thing to do with it, had never occurred to her. She had indeed attributed her niece's pensive aspect to another, and a truer cause ; but new air might be necessary for her, and better air—if such a thing could be found, and then change of scene. “ How inconceivable, (thought she,) that it should have escaped me ! Ah, my brother, you entrusted your child to a careless guardian ! And yet it cannot be my heart that errs, for it is all Janet's. Still these envious women could see what escaped the eyes of affection, usually so vigilant. Well, the error is, alas ! committed ; let us think of the remedy.

It was as quickly applied as thought of. Janet felt, when the proposal of quitting London was made to her, a glow of happiness run through her frame : but an instant's reflection brought before her all the difficulties with which a narrow income, long-cherished habits, intimate connections, and the invisible chains which get folded about one who has remained stationary for many years, encumbered Mrs. Brudenel's affectionate projects.

“ I cannot suffer it, my dearest aunt,” said

Janet, "It is for me to withdraw you from the home which you love, from the friends of your life, to wander about among strangers, with whom neither your habits or your heart may find affinity?—let us not talk of it. With you I am happy every where, and shall be well, too; you will see me recover the bloom which you regret: trust to my courage. When I think of the generous sacrifices you would make for me, I blush for my unworthy egotism: from this moment, dearest friend, I shall be less unworthy of your love. Heaven will, I trust, support me, and teach me no longer to grieve a heart so fond and disinterested, by the selfish indulgence of—of—"

"Hush, my love," interrupted Mrs. Brudenel, "we will talk no more of that; and as to sacrifices, so far from making one, I only put into execution a plan which I have had in view all my life. I am as sick of London as you are; and besides, can no longer endure that all the lean maidens in the neighborhood, who used to borrow—sometimes steal—my modes, and regularly waited till my spring bonnet or Kensington hat appeared before they ventured to order their own feeble imitations, should taunt me with Long-champs and the Tuilleries, and cry, 'Dear Mrs. Brudenel, you must curtail your petticoat, and increase your sleeve, and discard your cap

with the purple flowers ; no lighting up purple at night. Really you ought to go to Paris ; every one contrives it. You would look ten years younger in one of Herbault's delicious marmottes, with an under-wreath of the *fleurs de saison*.' In short, my dear child, I have decided on cultivating my personal charms, which, according to Miss Augusta Young and Miss Maria Jones, are still susceptible of improvement."

" Ah, my dear aunt !" said Janet, with an incredulous shake of the head.

" No expostulations, love. It is absolutely necessary to my happiness that I should be seen in a wreath forme diademe, entirely en fleurs fines, as Miss Augusta says emphatically ; and so no obstacles, if you please, no jealousy,—at least no demonstrations,—and to-morrow for the note of preparation."

A fortnight after this conversation, a large white paper, with " To be Let," in flourishing characters in the middle of it, obscured each centre pane of Mrs. Brudenel's dining-room windows ; and she was sitting on the deck of a packet-boat, happy in the feeling of self-approval, happy in the hope of future happiness ; and by her side Janet, with the strong sentiment of grateful affection in her heart, and its bright expression in her charming countenance.

A little later, and Janet's good sense and good feeling, her earnest desire to answer to her aunt's wishes, and render the sacrifices she had made for her availing, had begun to produce their natural results: her mind was fast recovering its tone, her cheeks their roses, and her heart a portion of its calmness.

Young maidens' hearts are often like the waters of the Dead Sea; there is an elasticity in their stillness which can buoy up the pearl, that in the turbulent ocean would sink at once to the bottom, or be thrown ashore among those idle weeds which it casts up from its bosom. Janet's had perhaps hopes, sustained she knew not how, and recollections of gentle promise, that still floated on the calm but strong support of woman's faith.

I say perhaps, for there were no longer any outward evidences of inward feeling. "Indeed," as Mrs. Jones, the mother of the illustrious Maria, observed, "why should Miss Hamilton fret about Mr. Dudley? I am sure it is very mean-spirited if she does, for 'tis plain enough that he never had any serious notion of her. I dare say Mrs. Brudenel made the first advances; and really young men must be on their guard, as I often tell my son Captain Jones, who is quite wild about her though she treats him like a dog,—

for the tune is now coldness and disdain, and all kinds of airs. But young ladies, who have themselves to provide for, must learn to sing in all keys.”
&c. &c.

These friendly and refined remarks were not meant for Janet’s ear, though they reached it; and she found reason in their coarseness, (as far at least as Dudley was concerned,) and something more too which roused within her that maidenly feeling that some call pride, and others self-respect.

—VI.—

It was dull weather when our travellers arrived at Paris, and Mrs. Brudenel pronounced (but not in Janet’s hearing) the introductory chapter abominable. Yellow fogs were forgotten, and the climate declared to be infinitely worse than that of London. And then the streets! such streets! River-lane, or Puddle-alley would, in her opinion, have been appropriate names for the very best of them,—five or six excepted. The theaters, too, were dirty, the houses cold, the fruit insipid, the game worse, and the odious wood-fires that one could not poke, and that took care of themselves so provokingly—so inferior to

coal—and the tiresome doors, that would neither shut or open!

By-and-by came sunshine and blue skies, and her heart softened a little. The Tuileries began to find favor for their shade, freshness, and brilliancy; the Palais Royal for its shops, its fountain, its palace, and its originality; and the Boulevards, with their country verdure and their town bustle, their breadth and fulness, their fine varying line, running along from the fashionable quarter to the joyous, and then on to the dull one, with the character of each stamped on its shops, its cafes, its people, were acknowledged to be—by day—the most varied and amusing of streets; and by night, like a traveller's tale of Bagdad at the Feast of the Lanterns.

An evening passed in admiring the unparalleled lilacs of the Luxembourg Gardens and the groupes that formed *Watteaus* under the spreading trees, and from thence to the Jardin des Plantes to see the setting sun light up the cedar of Lebanon, helped greatly to settle matters. This beautiful tree saddened Janet's fancy; it carried it back to the land of her father's wanderings. There is always poetry in the exiled air of a solitary tree from a far-off land, standing alone amidst strangers; when several group together they become too sociable

for sympathy, but this cedar was the type of Babylon in her captivity. Mrs. Brudenel was delighted with the gardens, the glowing sky, the foreground of rich verdure, the peopled distances, and the amusing groupes that ascended and descended the steps of the Belvedere, within which she sat watching the changes of the magic lantern ; while Janet stood leaning against the light enclosure, fancying that the towers and domes which rose out of deep shadow one above another on the red horizon might be like Jerusalem, until day was almost extinguished, and the illusions of twilight were fast changing the aspect of surrounding objects. "It is better than our square," said Mrs. Brudenel, smiling. Janet smiled too, but thoughtfully.

Dislike once conquered, is very apt to make way for liking. By degrees Paris became "quite a delight of a place,—the best residence in the world for unprotected females who were not enormously rich ; every thing so accessible, every one so justly appreciated,—not by their accessories, but by their own merits ; no trampling, or shutting out or beating down." In short, it was fast changing into the bright city ; and Mrs. Brudenel had more than once acknowledged that he had some reason who said that London was the paradise of the rich, but Paris the paradise of all the world.

It chanced, that about this time Mrs. Brudenel was discovered by a person of very high fashion, who had once lived in close intimacy with her brother; they had travelled long together, sometimes in toil often in enjoyment, and had separated with mutual feelings of friendship and regret. The Count d'Auberville had not only admired and esteemed, but had also essentially served Hamilton in an affair of danger and delicacy, and thus had become warmly interested for him, as people generally do for those to whom they have been of essential service; for it is man's nature to oblige because he esteems—ostener from weaker motives,—and to esteem because he has obliged. In the course of years they had, however, lost sight of each other. Hamilton's fate we already know: the count's career was more brilliant. He too had married, had risen to high dignities in the state, enjoyed a splendid revenue, a popular reputation, and was now the most renowned Amphytrion of Paris. He had but one child, a son of twenty, deformed and witty as Asmodeus, who assisted his mother, a well-bred, well-dressed, agreeable woman, in doing the honors of the finest, the cleverest, the most select, and most brilliant coteries of that most brilliant capital. Count d'Auberville was really pleased to meet the sister of his early friend,

(a very charming woman too, he observed when speaking of her to the countess, with her brother's fine eyes and air of high breeding,) and expressed much anxiety to see his daughter, politely presuming that she inherited the distinguished appearance of her family.

Visits, courtesies, invitations, followed ; and it was decided that Janet, who had never seen any thing in the shape of a ball, should make her debut at one to be given in the course of a few days by Madame d'Auberville. I shall pass over the dreams which Mrs. Brudenel had on this occasion,—rose-colored dreams, that all issued forth from the “porte d'ivoire,”—and hasten to the evening ; when, after having cast a glance over Janet's graceful though simple toilette, and a look that had an ovation in it at her charming figure, she proceeded with her bright charge and bright hopes, to the hotel d'Auberville in a carriage of the count's, which he had obligingly sent to convey them. In the ante-room a touch to the sleeves and a slight adjustment of the petticoat are inevitable ; these duties performed, they proceeded through an atmosphere of flowers, on whose glowing buds fell the gentle radiance of innumerable shaded lamps, to a suite of perfumed saloons, hung with blue and gold, and red and gold, and white and gold, which Janet

thought crowded, but where her aunt assured her there was scarcely a creature. This brilliant avenue terminated in the great saloon, whose unveiled effulgence almost blinded her unhabituated eyes. She stood a moment in mute amazement looking forward into a scene of splendor, whose bright dazzle awakened the vivid, and as it is usually styled, eminently vulgar feeling of wonder strongly within her. It was like a palace of light; the Arabian carbuncle seemed multiplied into thousands of bright drops, and there was music more magical than the *ut re mi* of the Prince Naritzkin, and diamonds thick as hail-showers, and ladies fluttering about like birds in an aviary, flying into mischief and out of mischief, some burning the points of their wings, and others sailing off with their pretty plumage in full expansion.

To her young fancy it all seemed like a fairy tale, an adventure of Haroun Alraschid. Already, when sliding in sideways to the Countess d'Auberville's chariot in her first ball-dress, the pumpkin metamorphosis had crossed her mind; but now the wand of the good god-mother seemed waving vigorously over her head, and she laughed to think how like the renowned Glass Slipper she felt herself,—as far as wonder went; and though the young

prince (for the ball boasted a blood royal) wore a plain suit of broad-cloth, she could not help fancying that it ought to have been a white and silver vest, set off by a Spanish hat with a plume of ostrich feathers.

Every young lady remembers her first ball; it usually makes an epoch in some way or other. She is enchanted or disenchanted, pleased or mortified, and generally though not always, agreeably enlightened on the score of her own pretensions. Janet had no pretensions: she did not seem to be aware of her beauty, certainly not to set any value on it,—it had not helped her to keep the only heart she had ever cared to obtain. To look or listen for admiration, never occurred to her; she knew nothing of the policy of beauties, or the play-off of charms to produce effect, and there she stood looking on at a quadrille with the admiring air of a novice, thinking how pretty one lady was, and how graceful another, and how beautifully every body danced, while she herself was the bright star of attraction; and belles wondered where she had come from, and beaux where she had been hidden, and mamas discussed her pretensions critically; one recollecting to have seen her five or six seasons before at Lady B——'s ball, while another remembered her "years ago" at Doncaster or Cheltenham,

could not recollect which,—and thought her gone off, but said it regretfully.

Two young ladies, both pretenders (and one successfully) to beauty, discovered that she wore rouge, and both thought her countenance particularly disagreeable.

“Do you admire her?” said one in tone that asked a negative, addressing her question to distinguished opinion on points of taste.

“Is there any one here who does not?” was the answer.

It is said that French women are sometimes moqueuses, but they are also indulgent, especially to the young and pretty; and before Janet knew that she was the object of uncharitable animadversions, she found herself surrounded by a circle, to whom Mrs. Brudenel had been presented by Madame d’Auberville, who said kind things and courteous ones, of her and to her, in that pretty, graceful way, that French women can all assume when they fancy it.

The Duc de C—— danced with Janet, not only once, but twice; and Mrs Brudenel, who had not before made up her mind on the point of political allegiance, immediately went over to the Opposition. Good, kind soul! it was an intoxicating moment for her; and while her vanity was in full ex-

pansion came Janet, who had at that instant concluded a quadrille, pale and red, and red and pale by turns, and whispered in her ear that she had just seen Mr. Dudley.

“Dudley!” exclaimed Mrs. Brudenel, in a tone of horror that seemed scarcely warranted by the occasion, “you have seen Mr. Dudley! And pray—that is, I suppose—I hope that he did not presume to speak to you?”

“He did not; he only bowed.”

“Bowed, indeed! Exceedingly nonchalant, and so like him; but you did not return it, my dear?”

“I did, indeed,” replied Janet. “I was not aware of any reason for not doing so, at least (she added, speaking very low,) any that my pride would suffer me to acknowledge.”

Mrs. Brudenel felt corrected, but merely said, “Well, my love, we will not say any more about it now; only if he should approach you when you leave me to join the dance, be sure that you take him coldly,—that is, not affrontedly, for that would look as if you thought him worth being angry with, but with perfect indifference, as if he were not present.”

“But, dearest aunt, would it not be better to return home? I have so little skill, that I may, from ignorance, not perhaps do exactly what you wish.”

"Do, my love, exactly what your own good sense and natural delicacy prompt. You have not the *savior faire* of the world, but you have of the mind:—but home we cannot go. In the first place, you are engaged for the next dance to a person particularly introduced by Madame d'Auberville; and in the next, ought we to fly and hide ourselves, because it pleases Mr. Dudley to throw himself in our way?"

"I believe not," said Janet; and at the same instant her partner approached to lead her to the dance, and the conversation ended.

A moment after, Dudley passed and bowed. Mrs. Brudenel bowed slightly in return, but not with the air of indifference which she wished to have maintained, and had prescribed to Janet; on the contrary, there was a flutter of anger of which she was herself distressingly sensible, but could not prevent. Had he taken her by surprise, her bow would doubtless have been perfect; but she had planned it, and like many preconcerted things, it failed in the execution.

Whatever may have been the shape it wore, the effect seemed to have intimidated Dudley, for he appeared no more in the ball-room that night; but Mrs. Brudenel fancied that she saw him, enveloped in his cloak, watching in the distance as she des-

cended the staircase. It did not cost her a moment's reflection to decide on the line of conduct which she ought to adopt towards him. He had unfeelingly trifled with Janet's happiness, nearly destroyed it ; by close though silent assiduity had won a new and unsuspecting heart, and then thrown it back with a wide scar in it, which was but just healing. And now that he beheld her admired, followed,—the brightest flower in the garden of beauty, it was quite in his character (she said) to renew his attentions, gratify his vanity, and then turn away to the Lady Janes and Lady Marys of his *natural atmosphere*.

Janet's heart struggled against the conviction of her reason ; but her better judgment and maindenly pride marshalled themselves beside Mrs. Brudenel's arguments, and it was decided that should Mr. Dudley call, they were to be denied ; and if chance should bring them again together, he was to be slightly acknowledged as a casual and almost forgotten acquaintance. And this rigorous decision, fully justified—indeed commanded, by previous circumstances, Mrs. Brudenel was the more determined to enforce, as she had still some doubts of Janet's positive convalescence, and more than doubts of her listening to the proposition of any other alliance while Dudley's

image threw itself in the way of less engaging pretenders.

But Dudley did not call, nor did he sue for, or in any way seek to reclaim the right of ancient acquaintance. Meanwhile two suitors entered the lists as candidates for Janet's favor. The one was the young Viscount d'Auberville, whose left shoulder was always in close confabulation with his ear, whose eyes looked lovingly on each other, and from whose keen double edged wit Janet shrank as children do from the bogie. It was a locust-wit, that destroyed every thing it rested on ; and neither Janet's beauty, or his passion, could always subdue its venom when the form of a rope, or the disposition of a flower, provoked it into activity.

The other pretender was the Count de Murville, a young, a rich, a very handsome man, of engaging address, high connexions, reputed clever, admitted amiable, and sought for by more than one active speculator, as one of the most desirable partis afloat.

It was one which would have met Mrs. Brudenel's entire approbation ; a character and habits that seemed calculated to ensure home enjoyment, disinterested affection,—a position to the value of which she was by no means insensible,—and all the minor aids that fuel happiness. No sooner

had this bright perspective opened before her, than all difficulties vanished. Never was a mind more delightfully constructed than hers. Some people reject the good which grows by the way side, others will only gather it when in full ear and the grain ready to fall out ; but she sifted it to the very chaff, and if a seed lurked there, brought it to light, and by the magic of a sunny mind made a grain of it.

"I have just been thinking, my dear Janet," said she to her niece, who sat drawing beside her, "what a charming pair you and the Count de Murville would make."

"Indeed!" said Janet carelessly.

"Yes, indeed. I have just seen you in your veil and orange-flowers."

"In the fire, I dare say," answered Janet laughingly, "with a young Moor in a blazing turban holding up my train, and the fire-king himself pronouncing the nuptial benediction."

"O no ; you carry the joke too far. My fire-visions are not quite so connected as you would have them to be."

"Why, dear aunt, it was only last night that you saw the viscount riding on a wild boar, with a cock-feather in his cap like Mephistopheles, and the twelve signs of the zodiac hanging up in the corner. You

know that you broke off the scorpion's tail in trying to make it visible to my dull eyes; and you know too, if you would but own it, that you never look up at the clouds without fancying that you see a chariot drawn by birds, or a knight on horseback, or an enchanted island in the midst of them."

"Pshaw," said Mrs. Brudenel, smiling, "how you run on. But all that has nothing to do with what I was talking of; let us be serious."

"I would rather be gay. Shall I sing my last song for you?—

There was a lady bright,
Who woo'd--

No, that is not it. Ah, now I have it:—

There was a valiant knight,
Who wood'd a lady bright,
When corn was on the ground,
And summer-buds were blowing.
But she would turn away,
And mock at his dismay,
As if his deadly wound
Were a flower in his bosom growing.

Or will you have a tenderer measure?—

I am not what I used to be,
When buds were braided in my hair;
I have forgot to smile, and he
Who used to call my beauty rare,
Is gone where others are more fair.

No, that will not do either," said Janet with a

half sigh. "So I believe after all, dear aunt—and dearer friend, I must listen to your dreams, be they of amethyst or emerald."

And so she drew her chair closer to Mrs. Brudenel's, and heard how the Count de Murville loved her, how ardently he desired to win her hand, how noble, how entirely disinterested were the propositions which he offered to her consideration, &c. &c. Then came the enumeration of his fine qualities, his mental, personal, landed, and funded attractions, and a warm panegyric on the sincerity of a passion that only sought permission to explain itself, and asked for nothing but to be allowed to hope. There was no word of fortune, (Mrs. Brudenel added,) no scrutiny of hundredth cousins, no inquire if Miss Hamilton had been to Devonshire House, or was received by Lady Jersey. O no! Miss Hamilton herself was every thing; all that he aspired to, or hoped for, on earth. "So unlike that egotistical Mr. Dudley," she was going to add; but a look at Janet's gentle, and at that moment, melancholy countenance, checked her asperity.

"And now, my love, what shall we say to the count: will you allow him to speak to you?"

"O no! do not ask it."

"Then will you authorize me to answer him in your name?"

"Certainly; if you will tell him frankly that I never—"

"Never!" exclaimed Mrs. Brudenel, interpreting what Janet would have said. "You do not mean to say that you refuse him?"

"I do indeed."

"But have you reflected on the advantages, the rank, the splendor, the happiness which you reject?"

"I do not feel that I reject happiness."

"But should I die, what would become of you?"

"What would indeed become of me?" said Janet feelingly, while tears started to her eyes. "But you are not going to die yet, my beloved aunt; and perhaps, as we have none of us leases, it may be my turn to go first."

"Not a word more on that subject if you love me," cried Mrs. Brudenel in a frightened tone, "but answer me with candor. Can it be that you have not forgotten Mr. Dudley?"

Janet blushed deeply, and then after a moment's hesitation said, "I fear not."

"Is it possible! My dear girl, where is your pride?"

"In my heart, and I hope to in my actions; yet I cannot but remember such things were,—do

not misunderstand me, my dearest friend, I am not what you would call in love; I could not be so with one of whose levity of mind I am now so well convinced. I say *now*, because nothing but the marked coldness of his present conduct could have made me really believe it."

"How is this, Janet?" exclaimed Mrs. Brudenel; "you who are the most ingenuous of human beings are falling into mystery, like a young lady in a novel, to whom a secret is as essential as pearly teeth, or a fine-drawn eyebrow. It appears that you are not attached to Mr. Dudley,—no question of the heart,—and yet the recollections connected with his name are still sufficiently strong to influence your decision in the most momentous concern of life?"

"It seems strange, and yet believe me I use no disguise. I no longer think of Mr. Dudley as I once did; indeed, I most anxiously wish that we may never meet again. But when I recollect the days that I have passed in his society, the charms of his conversation, the rich and inexhaustible resources of his mind, the freshness and variety which the monotony of our daily life received from the flashes of his fancy, the glow of his feeling—"

"Feeling indeed!" repeated Mrs. Brudenel; "any thing but that. Dudley may be a man of

romantic fancies, if you please ; but as to feeling ! —why his heart is as governable as the wiremoved eyelids of a wax-doll."

"Perhaps I do not use the right word. All that I mean to say is, that when I think of what once was, 'I feel my taste screwed up beyond the pitch of——I hardly know what to say,' " she added, looking embarrassed ; "but there are things in my memory that make what is called wit, and cleverness, and charm, appear so poor and spiritless, that I am sometimes inclined to shed tears when others far more bright and intellectual than I am are moved to laughter or admiration. And you yourself, dear aunt, how often have you expressed the same feeling ? Have you forgotten the day we all passed together at your friend Mrs. Aston's, in the backgrounds of Roehampton, when he sketched the gardener's cottage with the old apple-tree that grew before it, and the children that were jumping in and out of the hay-cart ? You remember how Mr. Dudley lifted the little girl up and down in his arms, because she cried to go with the rest and was not big enough to take care of herself, and your saying, 'Dudley spoils one for every one else ; the heart which he has touched is safe for life from all other impressions.' "

"Ah, my child," said Mrs. Brudenel, "you are right; there is indeed no mystery. After having sailed through the air with Dudley, you cannot lower your tone to a ramble in a paddock with another, however green and flowery it may be. My poor Janet! (she added mentally,) you have told a secret which in your innocence you were not aware of possessing."

After this conversation, it would have been worse than idle to have urged the suit of the Count de Murville. Janet was therefore allowed to decline his addresses, which she did with the usual mollifying dose of honor, regrets, &c. I do not exactly know whether she offered him her friendship,—the silver medal usually proffered on such occasions; but that his attachment was nothing weakened by her refusal, was certain.

—VII.—

The inflictions of the witty viscount, who followed Janet like a familiar demon, the melancholy aspect of De Murville, who though without hope still haunted her steps and communicated a portion of his sadness to her spirits united with de-

licious weather and some minor considerations, to induce Mrs. Brudenel to quit Paris for a short time; and Janet having fallen in love with Montmorency, where she had once spent a happy quiet day, she looked out for some unpretending nook in its neighborhood, where a few weeks of the spring could be passed agreeably. A cottage on the edge of the forest, a little removed from the beautiful village of Andilly, offered its half-furnished rooms, delicious views, and peaceful solitude. She took it immediately, and Janet found herself once more in the midst of woods and flowers, and all the happy and ever-dear recollections of her early life.

There are vistas in the forests of Montmorency, and sunny openings, and deep glades full of the spirit of thought and of wild and distant loneliness, that if we were to fall in with them in the defiles of the Appenines, or the soft valley of the Arno, or any other spot privileged to be beautiful, though perhaps not always really so, we should call by the sweet names of poetry and picture,—the last not sweet perhaps to sound, though beautiful in meaning. But Paris is forbidden to put in its claims in the way of scenery, and whenever the question is tried, stands capitally convicted of arid plains, chalky quarries, stone walls, and dull vineyards, that look at

a distance like turnip-fields, and when near not much better.

And yet even in the Bois de Boulogne there are spots on which a painter's eye might recreate, and trees under whose broad shade a poet might commune with nature, and listen to the nightingale or the cuckoo, in utter forgetfulness of that tumultuous Paris, at whose very gate he repose. But they are not to be found in the great alley, and strangers rarely look for them elsewhere. It is the same thing at Montmorency; there are things hidden within its forests that might tempt the wood-gods of the olden times to dwell amongst them, scenes that speak magically to the fancy, but which are never seen by the dulcet duos who arrive *en cabriolet* at the White or the Black Horse, or even by the gay freight of the dashing four-in-hand, who having verified the high reputation of Le Duc's* cookery, trot off on donkeys to the Hermitage, run round the garden, disturb the solemn shade which may perhaps at that moment be meditating on the terrace, and then trot back again in the gay spirit of pic-nic revelry, with no other impression than that of a bad road, and a good dinner.

Janet was in paradise, and even Mrs. Brudenel, who was no amateur of green fields, felt (as she ex-

* The host of the Cheval Blanc.

pressed it) as if she could clap her wings and crow. Half the day was spent in wandering about in the forest, finding out new spots, sketching old trees, and collecting plants for Janet's herbal, two thirds of which died almost as soon as gathered.

The first week had wings, the second loitered, but the third threatened (according to Mrs. Brudenel's calculation) a foot pace, when she, to vary the scene, proposed a ride to the Hermitage of Jean Jacques. Janet, who began to perceive that her aunt's enthusiasm waned a little, agreed delightedly to the proposition; and taking their gardener as a guide, they passed through the woods, and by the great tree and the fountain of Saint Rene, following the wild road behind the town, and descending through the immortal chestnut-grove to the sweet, and not un-picturesque dwelling, where the hermit, who was no sage, imagined Julie, gathered apples with Teresa Levasseur, and squabbled with her troublesome mother.

I am no admirer of Rousseau as a man; I never could forgive him the pink and silver ribbon,—to say nothing of his base betrayal of the weaknesses of his erring—but to him most kind—protectress, his heresies of the heart, which sent his children to be obliterated from the book of kindred in the chaos of a foundling-hospital, and much beside;

but I know of nothing more pitiable, of few things more touching, than the image of that fine genius, that rare and endowed mind, wedged in between the two miserable women with whom in his feebleness he had burdened himself, and submitting his half divine imaginings, his vivid ecstasies, to their dull judgment, with a credulity of good-will that presaged the ignoble subjection into which he afterwards sunk.

But Janet had not read Rousseau, and only knew that he was an unhappy man and an immortal genius. She had heard enough of him to create interest, but not enthusiasm: and giving herself up to the influence of the scene, the hour, the solitude, went back in heart—as in such scenes and hours she was wont to do—to the long gone-by.

The sweet, though limited view which the garden of the Hermitage looks upon, wore its softest aspect. The sun was setting, and the golden lights were on the tops of the high trees, while the woods below were steeped in shadow. It was the fete of the three Marys, and already the rustic orchestra was sending out festive sounds from its throne of turf under the broad chestnuts, and the cheerful murmur of village groupes passing through the vineyard-paths came gaily over the garden fence, and then

died away as it approached the scene of general merriment.

The distant buzz, of mirth and music, the perfect, almost solemn stillness of the immediate scene, the dying lights and gentle aspect of nature, affected Janet. The silence and retirement of a shut-in scene seem suited to awaken and feed reflection, as the vague distance does to warm and wing the imagination. Janet did not dream,—she thought; it was the hour of memory, and her heart (as I have said) went back to the Old home, and the early years, and the thousand things which she had once called possessions and fancied were her own for ever; but that now belonged to strangers, who slept in the chamber of her mother, and perhaps taught another little child in the dear jessamine-scented study, where she had learned her first lessons of infant love and lore.

It was on a bench already involved in shadow, and separated by some projecting branches from the path that descends into what is called the English garden, that Janet sat thus musing. Mrs. Brudenel was in the Hermitage looking over the rags and remnants of the immortal man. There was a ring at the garden gate, and two strangers entered: it was a lady and a gentleman. The white rose was shown, the window of the chamber in which Jean Jacques

had slept pointed out, and the gardener, observing that the bust was but a few steps off, would have led the way to it ; but to this proposition a very soft voice replied, in good French but with a foreign accent, " Thank you, not yet. We will first repose here a little."

Janet looked through the bushes, and saw close to her, but so separated that she herself could not be seen, a beautiful melancholy face, pale yet bright, like the evening star. It was not the face of a girl with the rich touches of hope, the vague fire-fly light of its new-born fancies and feelings still fresh upon it, but rather of one who, though yet in the morning of her day, was faded by premature sorrow ; it was evident that the illusions of life were over, and the realities already begun. Janet thought so, and while she looked at her admiringly, for she had never seen any thing so beautiful, the lady sat down, and her companion, whose figure was entirely concealed, placed himself beside her.

" Do not ask of me," said the same soft voice which had already spoken, that which I cannot grant. You know how hard it is for me to refuse you any thing, but I tremble to think of it."

" And yet, my Emily," replied another voice, " you tell me that your heart it still the same."

"Ah, can you doubt it? Think of the sacrifices ——but I am wrong to call them so; affection such as mine rejects a word so selfish."

"Do you then dread the world?"

"Ah, Dudley! that question from you?"

"It is true, my Emily,—I confess that I am wrong; but think how dear you are to me, how earnestly and above all things I wish to see you happy,—happy as the fond allegiance of devoted love can make you. To a mind like yours, life unembellished by affection, worn out in solitude, unconfident in hope, alarmed at chances, must be misery. Your very tenderness of nature, your purity—"

"Say rather my wretchedness," interrupted the lady, rising as she spoke, as if she feared to listen longer. As she did so, something dropped on the ground; her companion stooped to pick it up. A few words were then uttered in a low tone, to which the lady answered faintly, "My husband gave it to me."

One must have known what it is to believe in excellence, and to find that belief changed into the conviction of guilt, to imagine the pang that wrung poor Janet's heart as she caught from Dudley's own lips the proofs of his utter depravity. She had heard that he was a male coquette, one who won

hearts and then slighted them, but she had never quite believed it. It was true that in his conduct towards herself he had given evidence of egotism, caprice,— perhaps levity; but there might have been reasons, circumstances may have existed, in short, she could not bear to pull down the beautiful image which she had set up on her heart's altar. But here was guilt, palpable and deep guilt; it was plain even to Janet's ignorance, that Dudley was acting a base and cruel part. Never even to her had he spoken in a voice more full of tender earnestness; it was the same delightful voice that had so often beguiled her from thought to hope, and back again to those sweet musings in which her sorrowful ones were, for the time, forgotten. No other voice was ever like it; it seemed like the music of the soul, and never did its accents more skilfully assume the tone of deep and real feeling, than when employed to seduce a gentle and confiding heart from its true allegiance.

“Wicked and perfidious man,” said Janet in bitterness of spirit, “may your schemes be defeated! May the unhappy lady discover, before it be too late, the culpable designs which that sweet voice, those accents that seem so heartfelt, have hitherto concealed from her!”

At this moment Mrs. Brudenel came towards

her in an agitated way; and pointing to the two persons who were slowly quitting the garden, (the lady leaning on the arm of her companion, who still seemed to speak to her with earnestness,) said, "Have you seen him?"

"Seen and heard," replied Janet mournfully. "But it grows late; let us return."

"And without delay," said Mrs. Brudenel, "or we shall be benighted in the forest."

They rode home slowly and silently. There was still light in the west when they reached their wood-side cottage, and Janet sat down on a bench before the door, while Mrs. Brudenel placed herself beside her, and listened with less surprise than she expected to the detail of Dudley's turpitude.

And yet she was far from having imagined him so utterly divested of moral feeling, so profoundly corrupted; she had rather believed him to possess a mind finely organized, but not endued with sufficient strength to repel the force of factitious opinions; a mind originally noble, but warped out of its natural bearing by the influence of artificial distinctions. But now the illusion was destroyed, and the perversity of his real nature stood out in its full deformity. He was no longer a weak, but a guilty man; yet, though she expressed horror, disgust, disappointment, and felt them all, there

was still something not absolutely disagreeable to her in the discovery. As Dudley was so base, it was certainly well (she thought) that Janet should be aware of it. She might now perhaps be prevailed upon to think of one, whose exclusive attachment might be favorably opposed to the utter heartlessness of his rival. In short, something might be hoped for; and so, after many soothing words, and much of interest, really felt and affectionately expressed, for Janet's present sorrow, she retired to her chamber to build castles, and Janet to hers to lie awake, thinking how those which her fond and youthful fancy had erected, lay now in ruins.

—VIII.—

There were no shutters to Janet's window. A pale light streamed in: she rose and opened it. The air was pure and still; not a leaf moved, and the perfume of flowers ascended in a rich steam of fragrance from the garden beneath. The moon looked over the edge of the dark hills behind which it had lately risen, and soaring slowly upwards, sailed along with its mild attendant planet through

the starry and illimitable sea, where the paler constellations watch nightly, and the bright lamp of evening hymns the glory of its mistress in sweet and magical strains, sometimes heard by solitary men whose gifted ears have been suddenly opened to such music. As Janet looked up, a thin cloud passed over the face of the moon, and received the colours, of its halo. "Are you there, my father?" she said, as she gazed upon it; "my mother, do you look from heaven upon me?"

A nightingale in the adjoining thicket opened its wild throat, and sent out a gush of song that seemed to fill the encircling solitude. "My bird of birds," said Janet, "how full your sweet notes are of the past! It seems to me that I am again in my father's house, that I look once more upon my native woods, my own green forest of Friarslee."

One thought brought others, and Janet leant upon the window, and slowly repeated some lines which had been given to her by Dudley. But she was not thinking then of Dudley; it was the song of the bird, and the passing cloud, and the memory of the dead, that brought them to her recollection. She loved them for their sadness, and it was with tears that she repeated to herself these simple words:—

She look'd again,—she look'd again,—
'Twas nothing but a passing cloud;
And now and then a leaf flew by,
And now and then a stifled sound
Amongst the scented grass was heard,
As if of music under ground,
Or the low whisp'ring of a bird.

She look'd again,—she look'd again,—
Her step was swift, her eye was bright;
She listen'd like a startled fawn,
And then she fled,—the whimp'ring wind
Within the bearded thistle stirr'd;
No other sound of any kind
Was heard, except the whisp'ring bird.

She look'd again,—she look'd again,—
Her cheek grew pale, her heart grew cold:
" 'Tis nothing but the sea-bird's cry,"
She knew not 'twas a dying groan,—
" O come!" she said. No step was heard,
Nor sound, but of her voice alone,
And that of the poor whisp'ring bird.

" O look no more! O look no more!
Fair girl, thine eyes will never see
The eyes they seek;—they're clos'd in death;
And that proud lip that on thee smil'd,
Will never utter loving word.
There's nothing living in this wild
But thou,—and that poor whisp'ring bird.

A rustling in the trees startled Janet, and while she looked towards the spot from whence the sound proceeded, a figure issued from their shadow. It was a man who, passing into the light, directed his steps along the edge of the forest. " How strangely (thought Janet) does the fancy work? It is prob-

ably a peasant returning to his village, yet to my confused eye he looks like Dudley." Then closing the window, she lay down to rest, or rather to think, for sleep did not visit her eyelids till long after the sun had risen.

Poor Janet! how deeply was her heart lacerated. She might have forgotten Dudley, and yet been happy; but to remember him discolored by guilt, was terrible. It darkened her view of human nature, and would have weakened that beautiful confidence in the aspect of virtue, which is so natural and lovely in youth, if the candor of her mind would have allowed her to become suspicious. Meanwhile time wore on, and the Count de Murville's visits, which had never been wholly discontinued, became more frequent, and though coldly received by Janet, were obviously encouraged by her aunt. De Murville was (as I have already said) a person of more than common endowment, and there was something in the constancy of his passion that gave an interest to his manner and appearance, which they might not perhaps have had under other circumstances. Not that I would say that the perseverance of unreturned love is always interesting; on the contrary, it frequently excites ridicule, often displeasure. But De Murville's distinguished character, his external advan-

tages, which were of a high cast, and the proud delicacy of mind which continually and evidently (though without success) worked against the influence of an unshared passion, gave a coloring of dignified romance to his attachment, which made many fair ladies envy its object.

At length, not a day passed without a visit from the true knight of the forest bower; and when he had departed, Mrs. Brudenel, too adroit to disgust Janet by dwelling tiresomely on his merits, always contrived to place whatever he had said or done in the most advantageous and engaging point of view. Then came the comparison, not made but insinuated, between this faithful lover and the cold and culpable Dudley; and then the many reasons which her tender and anxious heart perpetually suggested, to conquer Janet's deep and extreme reluctance. But a thousand times more powerful than her reasoning were the ever-evident, though gently-urged wishes of her aunt, whose mild ascendancy was daily gaining strength, and gradually subjugating Janet's will by the power of affection. Often would she say to herself, "Do I not owe her a sacrifice? How many has she made for me. Has she not left the home, the country of her heart, her old friends, old habits, old affections,—all for me? and that at a time of life when such

changes are most painful, and with such heart-whole good faith,—no regrets, no reverting to things loved and resigned,—that one might suppose her voluntary exile to be the completion of her fondest wishes? And one word from me can make her happy," thought Janet; and that single idea did more for De Murville's cause, than all the rhetoric of man could have effected.

Perhaps it would have been more interesting, more according to the established rules of romance, had Janet vowed eternal fidelity to the recollection of one of whose utter unworthiness she possessed full evidence, and who she now believed had never loved her, instead of yielding to such homely motives. But truth must be told, even when it does not tell well; and the fact was, that Janet did yield,—slowly, reluctantly, sorrowfully, but still she yielded, with something like a smile in the presence of her aunt, but with many and many a tear in the solitude of her chamber.

One thing, however, she required before she would consent to receive the count's renewed addresses, and that was, that he should be fully informed of the interest which another had possessed in her affections, and of the circumstances which had converted it into—dislike, I think Mrs. Bruden-

el said ; probably for want of a more appropriate term.

"If," said Janet, "he should be inclined to think lightly of me for what has been, it is better, that he should know that he has cause to do so while there is yet time to draw back. Besides, he merits to be treated with perfect candor, and if I cannot feel for him the sentiment which he deserves to inspire, and which you tell me will come with time, at least I would not abuse his confidence by a deception; or add to my own perhaps ungreatful coldness, the weight of a recollection made culpable by concealment."

The disclosure was made, and received—as was natural—with emotion ; but the beloved is always right, and De Murville found an excuse for Janet's credulity in the candor of an innocent and unsuspecting nature.

At length the marriage-day was fixed, and as it approached, Janet's horror of a union in which her affections took no part, increased frightfully. But the word which she had given, she had not courage to recall ; her gentle spirit shrunk from the thought of destroying the hopes and peace of one who really loved her, and overthrowing the fabric of happiness which her fond aunt had raised, and loved, and deco-

rated, until it had become the worship of her heart.

A few days before the appointed one, Janet sat at her chamber-window and looked out upon the forest, and up to the blue and beamy sky ; but her thoughts were not on either. Before her lay the portraits of her parents ; she kissed them both again and again, and large drops fell from her eyes and obscured their beloved lineaments. She wiped them off, but others came “It is useless,” said the sorrowful girl, as she replaced the portraits in the case which was her constant companion, “I cannot see them to-day ; my eyes are dim, but they are in my heart. O that I were in the old church-yard beside them ! My sweet mother, my kind, dear father,—why cannot I rejoin you ! why cannot I die now !” and she dropped on her knees and prayed fervently.

Is there a heart, which in some heavy or excruciating moment, in fear, in indecision, in sorrow, has not acknowledged the power, or believed in the efficacy of prayer,—the wretch’s privilege, the believer’s consolation ? Janet rose from her knees more calm ; and while she bathed her eyes, and tried to efface the traces of tears from their swollen lids, Mrs. Brudenel’s voice called to her from beneath the window. She joined her immediately, and found every thing arranged for a forest excursion, the

long-eared cavalry ruminating patiently by the cottage fence, and their gardener and guide, Jules, waiting to conduct them.

"As we shall have but two days more at Montmorency," said Mrs. Brudenel, "I thought it might give you pleasure to take leave of some of your favorite haunts."

"You are always kind," replied Janet, and burst into tears.

"Tears!" exclaimed Mrs. Brudenel, "do you shed tears, my love?"

"I feel a little nervous; but it will be nothing. Which way shall we ride?"

"Wherever you like best; I have no choice."

"Then suppose we go up through the forest by the wild path, that looked so beautiful as we crossed it yesterday at sunset; we have not yet explored in that direction."

Mrs. Brudenel assented, and they rode on silently. The path was in many places so narrow, that one was obliged to follow the other. Janet, who was the best mounted, rode on first, and had advanced a short distance before her aunt, when at a sudden turn of the track, a woman in the dress of a sister of charity stood beside her. Janet would have drawn up to let her pass; but she sprang upwards a step or two on a bank, and as Janet rode by,

leant towards her and said, in a singular tone of voice, "Fair lady, if you are for holy Ursula, God speed you; but if for the world's love, go where the smoke rises," and in a moment her black robe disappeared through the bushes.

"Who spoke?" inquired Mrs. Brudenel, who just then turned into the path."

"A woman," replied Janet, "who was crossing through the wood."

"What an odd voice she has."

"Odd enough," said Jules, who now approached, "if it be, as I judge, Sister Mathurine."

"And who is she?"

"One that does much good and some harm; a poor half-witted soul, who sees things that none but herself can see. Some say she is inspired, others that some early sorrow has troubled her brain; but be that as it may, she is as harmless as an infant, and if you were sick and wanted her care, would come barefooted through the briars to give it to you. The poor have no nurse like Sister Mathurine, though she does frighten the people sometimes with her strange stories, and there are some who don't much like her coming about them."

At this moment, a wreath of blue smoke curled up spirally through a group of trees at a short distance, and immediately after, the cottage from which

it rose appeared on a green opening a few paces from the path, which was there so rough and obstructed by brambles as to be scarcely passable. An old man was shaking down walnuts from a tree before the door, which a sturdy urchin gathered up and stowed into a basket.

"What a delicious spot!" exclaimed Janet.

"And a very opportune one," added Mrs. Brudenel; "for see the big drops are already falling. We shall have a storm presently."

The old man who had been making the same observation, invited the party into his cottage; and having helped Mrs. Brudenel to dismount, led the way into a pleasant dwelling, with an air of order and comfort about it that does not always redeem the nakedness of a French cottage. A woman sat at work in a window; she was the old man's daughter, and a widow; who with the help of her son, took care of him and his house, and made his old age happy.

"We have a better room than this," said he cordially, "with a pleasant view upon the forest, if the ladies would like to rest there till the storm is over. One of the prince's gamekeepers lived here formerly and added it to the cottage. Nadine will show you the way, while I go and look after my walnuts"

The woman got up from her work, and opened a door into another room, in which were two casement windows profusely hung with vines, and both looking on a forest glade which, for its depth and shade, its solitude and freshness, might have passed for a corner of Tinian, or the lonely Eden of Juan Fernandez.

"What a gentle solitude!" said Janet, "so soft and silent; nothing stern or fearful in its stillness. How full and free the arching of the branches, how deep the shade—more beautiful even than the bushy hollows of our woods at Andilly."

"What did the woman say to you my love?" said Mrs. Brudenel, whose thoughts were evidently not with the Dryades.

Janet repeated her wild words.

"O, that was all; some mad-woman, I suppose." And then leaning against the window she fell into a reverie, which from the expression of her countenance seemed a painful one.

In fact, Janet's tears, her pale and pensive aspect, and the evident, but unsuccessful effort which she made to appear cheerful, struck and startled Mrs. Brudenel, and threw her into a train of thought that became every moment more perplexed and painful. "Is it possible (said she mentally) that the idea of her approaching marriage can cause this obvious

change, which to-day seems to me so marked, that I can only wonder at my own dulness in not having observed it before? But my mind was all in the future? and dreaming, planning, anticipating, I forgot the present, forgot my poor Janet, though I only sought to give her—friendless as she is—a protector more likely to go through life with her than myself. But it is all evident; I used the influence of affection unduly, and with my sanguine inconsiderate head, would have made a victim of my idol." And then came a thousand circumstances of confirmation before unthought of; and at last, the distressing conviction that Janet's heart was not a party in the projected marriage, or rather, had obviously taken the other side of the question.

While these thoughts were oppressing her mind, Janet, who was trying to turn hers out of their sad channel, examined some drawings that were pinned up against the wall, two or three of which were rather cleverly done, in a light sketchy way; and it struck her, as she looked at them, that the scenery of which they attempted to give an idea, had something of an English air.

Nanine, in answer to Janet's inquiries, said that they had been done by her son, who was thought to have some turn that way, and who would willingly do nothing else but draw all the day long. The gen-

tleman, (she added,) who had recently lodged with them, had kindly given him some instructions, and lent him his own drawings to copy from.

"I think he must have been an Englishman," said Janet, "from the character of the scenery?"

"Yes, madam, the gentleman was English; but he took to the country here, and used to wander about in the forest from sunrise till nightfall."

"What was his name?" inquired Mrs. Brudenel, whom the word English had awakened.

"We never knew his name," replied Nanine; and added feelingly, "but we knew how good he was, and it grieved us much to lose him. I thought my son would have fallen ill, he fretted so."

"Was he married?"

I do not know, madam, (hesitatingly,) I am not sure."

"He was then always alone?"

"Not always, madam. Latterly a young lady came with him here frequently, and they would stroll about in the forest for hours together; and in the evening they would walk over the hills towards Margancy, and then we saw no more of him for the night."

"He returned, I suppose, with the lady to Paris?"

"My son thought so; for he once saw them get

into a carriage, which waited at the foot of the hill, and drive off in that direction."

"Was the lady handsome?"

"I am a poor judge of beauty, madam; but to my eye she was the loveliest person I have ever seen, though her look was sorrowful, and her voice as if there were tears in it."

Mrs. Brudenel mused, and Janet turned to the window to conceal her emotion.

"But he left some scraps behind," continued Nanine; "will you look at them? I have kept them because they were his, though I cannot read the language they are written in." Then opening a drawer, she took out from it an old sketch-book, in which four or five torn leaves alone remained, and gave it to Mrs. Brudenel.

She opened it. On the first leaf was written in a well-known hand the letters H. D., and under them in pencil, 'How vital is the solitude of nature! but the solitude of the heart is loneliness. My poor Emily! your heart and mine are like the desolate mansion, in which the voice cries that finds no answerer.'

Underneath was a slight sketch, pasted on the leaf, which Mrs. Brudenel instantly recognized as one that she had seen Dudley make of the gardener's cottage at Roehampton, to which Janet had once al-

luded. The bay-cart was there, and the old apple-tree, and the rustic seat inserted in the garden fence, and canopied with honey suckle, and below were written the lines that follow :—

THE PAST.

O that familiar voice! which never, never,
By my tenacious heart can be forgot;
And the young day-break smile, that comes for ever
Dancing before the eyes that seek it not.
It is not good to dwell upon the days
When such things were for me,—for me who now
Must put away the hope that idly sways
A heart, in whose parch'd soil dull weeds alone can grow.

For I must journey on to other lands,
Where never flowers of home their buds unclose,
To wish 'midst all a southern sun commands
For the gay pansy, or the common rose,
That grew within the garden ever dear,
With ruddy apple blended, and the thorn
On which the currant ripen'd,—humble cheer,
But well worth golden fruit of foriegn climate born.

Yet were there moments when the charm, decaying,
Would yield to present sunshine; and the heart,
From what it first had lov'd too lightly straying
Would taste those sweets which other joys impart.
But as the future seems more narrow growing,
And falsehood and false hopes their shadows cast,
O, how the morning sky of life seems glowing!
O, how the heart turns back, and whispers with the past

After these lines followed the profile of a female, half effaced, but with the hair arranged something in the way that Janet usually wore hers; then

another attempt at the same head, in which the likeness was too strong to be mistaken. Again on the next leaf the same profile was repeated; and near to it was another, bearing a striking resemblance to the fair but mournful face of the hermitage garden. Nanine pointed to it, and said, "That is the lady who used to visit 'Monsieur.' Beneath was written,

"19th of May.—This is the anniversary of poor Emily's wedding-day. How brightly it rose, and how beautiful she was,—beautiful and happy! how little did we think that we adorned a victim. The wedding-day! the day of joy, that often ends in bitterness!"

O, how sweet it is to sit upon the grass amongst the flow'rs,
When the ev'ning air dies in the boughs, and white leaves fall
in show'rs

From the crimson-spotted cistus, who loves the king of day,
And will not live in paler lights when his has passed away.

This cistus is like many a heart, but it matters not for why;
I was talking of the grass and flow'rs, and the perfume'd winds
that die

Among the scented blossoms; but my mind must needs grow
sad,

Thinking of old beloved things, that once could make it glad.

I thought upon a summer's morn, when a gentle bride arrayed
In budding flow'rs, and curious gems, and pearls in cunning
braid;

While tears were in her downcast eye, and gentle sighs did
steal,

And her sister wept beside her, and her mother's cheek was
pale:

Look'd upon the slender lilies she had planted with her hand,
And kiss'd the very leaves that grew around where she did stand;

Then mournfully with loving arms her mother did caress,
And 'gainst her sister's girlish cheek, her girlish cheek, did press.

But better think no more of that,—'twas a day of joy and care,
For weeding-days are always so,—'twas nothing new or rare;
Let's think upon the summer sun that sinks into the sea,
Ah no! nor grass, nor sun, nor flow'rs, are now the same to me.

Strange things are thought and memory, that come we know not why;

A passing cloud, a falling show'r, will sometimes wake a sigh
For things that nothing have to do with cloud or falling show'r:
O heart! thou art the mystery, the magic, and the pow'r.

How close the secret of the past lies hid within thy folds,
'Tis like a thought unspoken,—a story never told;
Should nothing kindred waken it, 'twill silent long remain,
But a breath—a word--and the brief link becomes the lengthen'd chain.

Some scraps of paper, which had been torn and joined together, (Nanine said by her son, who loved to preserve every thing that had belonged to Monsieur,) were pasted on the last leaf. They were the fragments of a note in the hand-writing of a female, of which these broken lines were alone discernible: "But not to-day—to-morrow if you will. Edward is certainly in Paris; B——has seen him,—my head is distracted; such days and nights! —perhaps you can come here; your presence would give me strength; adieu till then, kind and dear brother. E. M."

"Brother!" exclaimed Mrs. Brudenel, as her eye glanced over the fragments. "Good heaven, it is his sister! how hasty and unjust we have been. But who could have imagined it? We certainly were not obliged to do so, who scarcely knew of her existence, and still less of her misfortunes. Yet I wish it had been otherwise, and that we had taken a little more time for inquiry;—and you too, my love, feel I am sure, on this point as I do."

But Janet did not answer. Her cheeks glowed, her eye glanced over the fragments, tears stood on the points of her long eyelashes, but the beating of her heart, the press of joyful emotions, left no way for words. At length, she returned the pressure of her aunt's hand, and faintly articulated, "Thank heaven, he is not guilty! I thought it—I knew it!"

Mrs. Brudenel smiled archly.

"At least, I hoped it," said Janet, "I am sure I hoped it. I know now that I did so; it was that hope which was always working in my heart."

"And he loves you still, he has never forgotten you?"

Janet blushed, and was silent. She would fain have put down her joy entirely to the account of Dudley's justification; but her aunt repeated, "He loves you still?"

Janet raised her eyes towards her aunt's face, with

one of those indescribable but explicative looks, of which words are but imperfect translators. "I think—I hope—that is, I believe—"

"How eloquent you are, my love," interrupted Mrs. Brudenel; "such a flow of words, and so beautifully sustained! Really, if you talk thus, some leaden dealer in rhymes will borrow you for a muse. But the rain has ceased; let us return homewards, we have much to talk of."

"But the book—"

"O, we will ask the good woman to lend it to us, and Jules will go bail for our honesty."

This was easily arranged; and having bade adieu to Nanine, with the promise of ere long paying her a second visit, they took the shortest track through the forest, and were soon in the old spot, on the green bench before the door of their cottage.

How beautiful every thing appeared! how sweet was the face of nature! how fresh the coloring of the woods, and the sounds within them—the chirping of birds—the busy hum of insect wings—how full of joy they seemed! It was the happy heart that had thrown its sunshine over them; it was the light of the mind that rayed itself out upon the landscape, that empurpled the hills, glistened on the small lake in the valley, and warined the whistle of the birds into the music of paradise.

How the good aunt talked! and how the gentle Janet listened!—with smiles on her lips, and tears in her eyes, and that something in her heart which neither tears or smiles could explain; for there is no language either of lip or eye, that can paint the intermediate shades between the emotion which yet partakes of the tremulous apprehensiveness grown into the mind with long-indulged-in sorrow, and the glad feeling native to the young heart, which accepts delightedly the first chance of hope, never doubting that it is certainty.

—XI.—

It was now impossible to think of a union with De Murville. Janet, who had shrunk from it with a feeling little short of horror when she believed Dudley culpable, would now have preferred death to its completion; and Mrs. Brudenel, who had been wretched from the moment of discovering that Janet's heart rebelled against her favorite project, felt as if a weight of lead had been removed from her own. But how to disclose this to De Murville? how destroy the hope on which life itself seemed suspended? It was painful, difficult, cruel,—but inevitable. There was but one way of acting, and

that was to use the utmost candor, to explain every thing frankly, guarding only the secret of the unflattering sentiment of repugnance which Janet felt towards him.

"Not for worlds," said Janet, "would I wound his heart unnecessarily. But rejoice with me that he already knows the secret of my early preference. Had I concealed it, how mean and artificial I should now appear! how hateful to myself, and how full of duplicity in the eyes of one who believed me without guile!"

The case was one of extreme delicacy, and Mrs. Brudenel determined to write to De Murville that evening. "At present, my love," said she, "the soup cools; and in the midst of those divine things called hope, love, and joy, one must dine, though it is a low kind of necessity too, I grant you. But here is the mad-woman coming through the wood. Let us go in."

They entered the cottage, and the sight of Sister Mathurine having recalled her prophecy, "How odd it is," said Janet, "that these wandering minds should strike out things that astonish sane ones."

"O, they make lucky hits, like the gipsy fortunetellers who infest our race-grounds, whispering at every carriage-door, 'You've a pleasant face, lady; you'll soon have great riches, ma'am; there's a letter

coming over sea to you, miss,' and so on, till the cap fits somebody, and then they cry out, 'How very extraordinary !' "

"And yet it was odd that literally where the smoke rose—"

"May I come in ?" interrupted a voice at the window. It was the sister of charity ; the window was low, and she leant in upon it, repeating her question.

"I wish she would go away," said Mrs. Brudenel, who feared her crazy freaks. "My good friend, I do not think you can have any thing to say to me ?"

"Not to you, certainly ; but to her who sits there by you."

"Poor thing !" said Janet. "Let her come in ; she looks very harmless."

"Harmless enough," said Jules, who was placing some flower-pots on a stand, "and kind too, though not always right in the head. But it's best to let her in, at any rate ; if you send her away, you don't quite know whom you may anger."

Janet opened the door, and with a sweet smile prayed Sister Mathurine to enter. She did so ; and approaching the table, said, with no ill grace,

"Will you, ladies, allow a robe of frieze to sit down with you ? It is late, but I have not tasted

any thing since yesterday. Our order has its denials; Heaven has given us hardships, that we may learn to bear them."

Mrs. Brudenel contemplated for an instant her gentle countenance, and felt ashamed of the momentary harshness to which she had given way. To make amends for it, she took her hand, and pressing it kindly, placed a chair for her beside her own, while Janet hastened to put wine before her; but she would not taste it, drinking only water and eating sparingly of the simplest food. Her words were few, but calm and reasonable, and she answered some inquiries which Mrs. Brudenel made about the rules of her order, with much intelligence.

" You have come a long way this morning?" said Mrs. Brudenel in a tone of inquiry.

" Only from the white house behind the forest; but I had watched all night beside a dying woman, and my heart was weary. My way is to St. Denis, where I have a home with other sisters of our order; but the good people of the villages round here know me, and are pleased when I come among them. They believe in my skill, (she added with a smile,) and will take my simple medicines with more faith than more skilful compounds. Sometimes I feel strangely, and then I love to wander in those lonely

places where the air comes at once from heaven ; I am the better for it. The wood-sounds cheer my heart, and when I hear the ruddock sing amongst the winter berries, or the hammer of the little wood-hatch, it beats less heavily."

Janet's eyes filled with tears. There was nothing remarkable in the words of the poor sister of charity, but her voice and figure had something in them inexplicably touching.

"Your eyes have tears in them," said the sister. "They have been in mine, too,—but now, never. When the eyes weep, the heart is happy; mine is sad, that which the palmer-worm hath left hath the locust eaten,—and yet I laugh," and then she laughed as if the thought had joy in it; but it was a hollow sound, a "mirth in which there was heaviness."

"I wish she would not laugh," said Mrs. Brudenel, in English, "it wrings one's heart."

"Ha!" exclaimed the sister, "your strange language,—how oddly it sounds. I think I was in your country once, but I am not certain; I have lived so long on earth, that my memory no longer serves me."

"And yet you look still young?"

At this remark her countenance underwent a singular change, the pupil of her eye dilated, her

cheek colored suddenly, the habitual gentleness of her countenance gave way to a wild and severish expression, and in the same odd tone in which she had addressed Janet in the forest, she said, "When Simon Peter cast his nets into the Lake of Genesareth, I was with him ; I saw the star rise in Bethlehem, and drank from the wine-cups in Canaan. I have been in paths which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen ; the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed it by.* I have lain like Behemoth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reeds and fens ; the shady trees have covered me with their shadow ; the willows of the brook have compassed me round about. I sang with the daughter of Judah in her banishment ; and when the wolves, terrible as in the days of Habakkuk the prophet, came down into the forest, I sought in its depths Him who made the seven stars and Orion. I knew your father," she continued, turning suddenly to Janet, "in the Holy Land, where the Cross is seen nightly in the heavens ; in Rama midst the lamentations of the women ; in the wilderness of Judea where John preached."

Janet grew pale ; her father had lived long in

* Job.

those lands, and though the words of Sister Mathurine could be nothing more than the accidental combinations of insanity, she shuddered.

"You fear me," said the sister with a smile that, like the flower of the nightshade, seemed to spring out from a deadly root; "some may have cause, but not you—not you. The holy Ursula, who is above in heaven, guards such as you are; such sat within the tents of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. Beautiful and well favored they were, and the wings of angels overshadowed them. But the people of the world, what are they but the flock of the slaughter; and the bounds of the world but the border of wickedness?" Then suddenly rising up and standing before Janet, she added, "He whom you love is true,—the thought is in his heart that will never leave it. Look not like the mother of Sisera out of the window; cry not through the lattice, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?' for you shall be blessed like Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite,—blessed above all the women in the tent." Then suddenly softening, while her voice recovered something of its natural tone, she took Janet's hands; and holding them gently within hers, drew her nearer towards her, and looking intently in her face, said, "Fear nothing;

those who bore the prophet on their wings into the country of Chaldea to them of the captivity, are with you. There is a woman, who sits by Saint Michael's well at midnight, who could tell you more than I can. But you must not go to her; no, no; it is not well for maidens to wander about the woods in the dark hours."

As she continued speaking, her voice sunk gradually into a tone of extreme gentleness, the color faded from her cheek, and she again became the poor sister of charity, meekly performing the duties of her holy calling, and journeying without staff or scrip from the bed of pain to that of death, with the humble but courageous piety of a real Christian; the flush of unnatural excitement had subsided, the chord, accidentally struck, no longer vibrated, and taking up the small bundle of medicinal herbs, which was all that she carried with her, she thanked Mrs. Brudenel for her hospitality, and smiling kindly on Janet, took her leave.

"How unaccountable are the wild lights of a disordered mind," said Janet thoughtfully.

"Mere raving," answered Mrs. Brudenel; "but your nerves, my love, are agitated by the events of the morning, and the poor soul's random eloquence, and still more her sweet voice and gentle aspect have affected your imagination."

"That may be ; but what she said of my father —was it not singular?"

"It was an odd coincidence, bat nothing more. It is evident that only certain chords of Sister Mathurine's mind are affected ; she has some wild recollections connected with her knowledge of Holy Writ, and what she said to you she has probably said to many whose fathers have never been in Palestine, and who therefore saw nothing in her unconnected words but the broken links of some far-off chain of thought, which no longer hung upon each other."

But Janet was not quite convinced. She had not yet outlived the age of romance and mystery, and the scattered reason of the poor sister seemed to her to emit an unusual light, as the crushed flower sends out a stronger perfume than when it grew and bloomed upon its stalk. But matters of more moment were to be discussed, and Sister Mathurine was forgotten.

—X.—

Two good and kind hearts, and two heads, each with its fair proportion of brains, felt and thought, and thought and felt, with pens and ink, and wax and paper before them, for one, two, three hours,

without producing any thing that came near to the expression which they wished to convey to De Murville of their feelings.

"All this perplexity," said Mrs. Brudenel, "is the consequence of my want of penetration and thought. Had I studied your heart, I should have learned how it was affected ; but I wheedled, and reasoned, and coaxed and argued you into the sacrifice of your happiness—O, no extenuation ; I am guilty, and ought to suffer—at least exposure. I did not, it is true, command, but I used undue influence : and now I am reduced to the old palliatives, 'I thought it was for your happiness ; I did it for the best,' &c."

"All that you do is suggested by kindness," returned Janet ; "and all that you have done for me might be registered above, where acts and motives are written down together. But this letter—"

"To-morrow," said Mrs. Brudenel, "I shall be beforehand with Aurora, and I promise that when we meet at breakfast, the embarrassing and most painful task shall be accomplished. But at present we will go to bed ; and so good night, dearest."

To-morrow came and with it the letter, written with candor and feeling ; but before the messenger had departed, came one from the Count de Murville,

which rendered its explanation unnecessary. Mrs. Brudenel opened it, and read as follows :—

“ I can no longer, my dear madam, remain silent on a subject which has long pressed upon my heart, and now so alarms my sense of all that is right and honorable, that the silence which I have too long maintained, becomes insupportable.

“ You well know how much beyond all other things I cherished the idea of calling Miss Hamilton my own, that my soul had no other hope, my mind no other thought, my heart no other anticipation. I looked forward into life, and there she stood filling up the space which had no other object in it but herself,—nothing on which my eyes could rest even for a moment. Yet even then, the idea that I owed a consent (yielded with a reluctance to which even love could not blind itself) to the defection, and still more—or, perhaps, I should say entirely—to the unworthiness of another, often interfered its shade between me and my dream of happiness. My honor also often asked me a perplexing question; it was this,—Is that other really unworthy? and I evaded the reply. And yet, when with the frankness that distinguishes your character you disclosed to me the secret of your niece’s former preference, and the discovery which you had made of Mr. Dudley’s culpability, a confused recollection crossed my mind

of something about his having a sister, then at Paris, whose beauty and misfortunes had made her an object of peculiar interest. I remember the report, but dared not inquire into its truth. I felt that I ought to speak of it, but could not ; my heart found a thousand subterfuges, which all who have loved as I have done will understand. I tried to persuade myself that Mr. Dudley was a libertine, who well deserved to lose the jewel which he could not wear in honor ; and, if I may say what seems inexplicable, almost persuaded myself into a belief which I felt was an injustice.

“ And thus I lulled my conscience, until at length it ceased to trouble me, and my heart ran over with the intoxication of hope, of almost certainty. But within a few hours a circumstance, not necessary to detail, has put me in possession of a fact, which I feel myself bound in honor to disclose, though well aware that all which renders existence precious to me hangs upon the result of this revelation. I cannot imagine life without her. The sun may rise, but there will be no daylight for the closed heart—But of this no more ; I feel that I shall want all the strength which I am thus idly wasting.

“ Dudley is innocent,—you may believe it, for I tell you so,—I, to whom his guilt would have ensured happiness. The lady who was with him

at the hermitage is his sister, and the wife of Lord Edward Montague. A series of injurious treatment caused her to quit his house and seek an asylum with a female relative resident in Paris, and who had been her friend in childhood. This unfortunate lady is—as you described her—a person of remarkable beauty; her marriage was one of romantic affection; and love—stronger in her heart than anger—still survives the wreck of her early hopes.

“Her unhappy story is no secret. Insulted in her pride, wounded in her tenderness, she quitted Lord Edward publicly; and this circumstance of publicity is supposed by many to operate on her mind against a reconciliation, sought for by an apparently repentant husband, and urged by her brother with all the perseverance of affection. It has been thought that having braved public opinion by a hazardous step, for which she assigned no other than general reasons, (*honos* and pride forbidding her to say more,) she now feels reluctant to authorize a presumption of error or injustice on her part, by reclaiming the protection of the husband whom she had voluntarily quitted. But it is not so; her moral courage is equal to the softness of her heart; she still loves, she even forgives him. But there are circumstances in this melancholy

story with which the public cannot be made acquainted, and which render the idea of returning to the home of this wild and gloomy man fearful to her. [Thus is the mystery of the hermitage scene explained, and the supposed pleadings of a seducer converted into the heartfelt reasoning of sincere affection.

"I have yet another act of justice to perform, one from which I feel that I ought not to shrink, however fatal such frankness may be to my hopes. Dudley has never ceased to love your niece ; his heart has never been unfaithful ; false views, false ideas, a mind hedged in with prejudices,—but no levity, no change.

"I cannot say more,—judge what it must cost me to say thus much. In justifying Mr. Dudley, I sing, perhaps, the death-warrant of my own hopes, and that too at the very moment of their promised completion ; but the feeling of honor has made itself heard even above that of love. I would not owe even Janet's heart,—the richest of all earth's treasures !—to an act of duplicity. How indeed could I enjoy such a possession while hourly shamed by its purity ?

"I do not—I could not know Mr. Dudley ; but I have secure assurance of the truth of all that I have said in his favor. Your niece will judge

between us ; but her decision must be free as air, without the influence of word or implied wish. I will owe nothing but to her heart ; should it reject me, the world with all its illusions will be to me a desert, where neither voice of joy gladdens the heart, or dew of heaven fosters it into freshness.

“Claim, I acknowledge, I have none, for there can be nothing binding in a promise yielded under the influence of a false impression ; that which Miss Hamilton was prevailed upon to accord me is annulled. I resign it with a feeling which her decision can exalt to rapture, or lower to despair.”

I shall not dwell upon the sentiment of admiration which this letter called forth, or the tears which interrupted its perusal. It was true that De Murville had committed an error, but how frankly it had been avowed, how splendidly atoned for. Janet, as she read it, almost wished that she had never known Dudley ; but now nothing could dissever that first knot. It was more than possible that she might never see him again ; but she knew that though greatly faulty, he had not been false, and that virtue no longer forbade her to dwell upon the past. And yet she felt that De Murville’s beautiful disregard of all self-interest had raised him far above a rival, who had lowered his fine mind and bowed his heart—while all its rich and

generous feelings were obviously rebelling—in humble abeyance to the decisions of a tribunal which he internally despised.

There were, as I have already said, tears and praises, gratitude and regrets, deep and real—both felt and expressed ; and tenderness that dared not show itself, lest it should be mistaken for compassion,—in general an offensive expression of feeling, unless it may dare to be open in its sympathy. There was all this, and more ; but nothing of that sentiment which De Murville sought to inspire,—no answer to the question of his heart.

It was now the month of July, and the army of Algiers was in its full career of glory. De Murville embarked on board a vessel ready to sail from Toulon, and joined it as a volunteer. He went with his gallant spirit and his desolated heart to the new crusade, the wild warfare of the desert ; and Janet returned with her aunt to the still streets and summer solitude of Paris.

—XI.—

It is long since we have known any thing but by hearsay of Dudley, and now he is no longer the Dudley of other times,—“ th’ expectancy and rose” of ladies’ hopes, the mirror in which fashion glassed

itself; but a melancholy man, journeying on to Hyeres, with that poor sister whose heart sorrow had almost broken, and who was now upon her way to try what the gentle influence of a southern sun could do to heal the sickness of the soul,—that miming malady which neither “poppy, nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups of the East” can cure.

Dudley had erred deeply; but if repentance may be allowed to redeem an error, his might be thought atoned for. He had found a new heart in a pure and beautiful setting, had coveted and gained it, and then left it to wither in loneliness, or to be won by another; while he himself found out, too late, that all the adornments of life, all the blandishments of love and hope, all the delights of intercourse with a responding spirit, had staid behind with it.

When Dudley first found his steps bending daily, and almost mechanically, to R——Street, he was far from imagining that he was fast involving himself in the difficulties of a serious attachment. It was so long since any thing had really interested him, that the delight of a new sensation, the charm of fresh excitement, was to him like the philosopher’s stone, transmuting every thing that came within its contact into pure gold. At first, there were moments when something like reflection would

force itself upon him, but they were few and distant : and latterly, to pass the day in the heaven of Janet's presence, and to go it over again minute by minute during the hours of inevitable absence, was all the account he made of time. Every morning he rose with the expectation of seeing her whose image had brightened his dreams, and every evening he said " Good night," with the hope of such another morrow.

I know not how long this might have lasted, had not the day at Roehampton opened his eyes. That day Janet was so beautiful ! her beauty was so much in harmony with the simplicity of nature ! In town, she was less detached from the surrounding objects,—her dress, her occupations, her habits, approached her more to other people ; but while she sat under the shade of the old apple-tree, with two large green leaves stuck horizontally into the front of her hair, and arranged as a sun-shade by a little girl who had begged to wear her bonnet " just for two minutes," she looked as if she belonged to the flowers that blossomed round her,—as if she was their queen, chief lily of the tribe who had never been lighted to bed but by the lamp of the glow-worm.

And then the mind that looked out from her

beautiful eyes, and the pure and natural heart ! At once he felt the danger and the dishonor of his position, felt that he loved as he had never done before,—passionately, exclusively ; and saw, through the maidenly reserve of her who had inspired this deep and absorbing feeling, that she was not indifferent to its silent eloquence.

I will not try to detail the conflicts of opposing feelings that followed the sudden retrospect into which his mind had been forced, the hard-sought battles between growing love and ingrained prejudice. In a lighter mood he might perhaps have temporized with what the world calls morality ; but he felt that, in his present situation, whatever was not tenaciously honorable, would be utterly unprincipled ; that there should be no sale-shop in the mind for indulgencies, but a vigorous rooting up at once, and with both hands, not only of the flowers which beauty, innocence, the charm of feeling, and the grace of mental refinement had sown in his breast, but of the buds which were just blowing out in hers.

Janet was honorably born, virtuously educated, and with a mind formed, like her person, in all the prodigality of nature. But then her family, though ancient, was worn out and forgotten ; her position in life obscure, and might be misrepresented, or

guessed at unfavorably... The *world* would inquire, "Who is she?" and would answer its own question loweringly, perhaps with malevolence; and then the sneers, and the scorn, and the vengeance, contemptible though not contemned, of those whose palpable advances he had slighted, and the jeers and triumph of his particular friends, whose projected conquests he had sometimes—in pure badinage—anticipated. In short an army of giants, whom one breath of reason would have reduced to their true pigmy proportions, stood up round him, brandishing their wooden swords, and closing in all the avenues of better feeling.

It is impossible to excuse Dudley,—almost impossible to imagine how a fine-minded, high-spirited man should find such paltry obstacles imposing; probably the force of early impressions, of education, the influence of habitual society,—in short, those who have been placed in the same situation will perhaps understand it, and those who have not—But there are doubtless few, who at some moment of their lives have not felt how much heavier than a chain of lead may be one of feathers.

To part from Janet was agony to Dudley; but to have farther involved her happiness would have been base. His own danger, too, became every hour more imminent. He felt this, and fled,—but

the arrow was in his heart; he threw himself into dissipation, proved its inefficiency, and drew back disgusted.

It was in vain that his fashion, his figure, his talents, were praised at Vienna by those whose smiles were fame; in vain that at Dresden fair eyes spoke fairer things to his dulled vision, or that paler stars sunk into total eclipse when he produced his melancholy figure at the court of Turin. Nothing would do; bright beauties showed themselves, and soft ones suffered themselves to be seen, but he neither looked at one or the other. In short, when the heart is *sincerely* pre-occupied, it is vain to expend ammunition on it; it is but sowing corn on a gravestone. When the young leaves of the oak bud out, they push off those which have remained from a former summer; but then the old ones are withered, and fall because they have no adhesion.

He continued to travel,—but not to courts; he was angry with their cold ceremonials, impatient of their pageants; found their most admired ornaments insipid, and believed them false—in short he was unjust, because he was unhappy. “Such women as these, he would say, as the beauties of the night floated before him,) would disdain to modify their graces into the softer charm of house-

bold loveliness. Their minds are like the splendid palaces of Italian architecture, sumptuous facades, gay vestibules ; a bright display of all that is most effective in art ; gold, velvet, gorgeousness ; but no home corner, no precious unexhibited spot where the tired spirit might repose in the luxury of uncalculating ease, or the sweet intercourse of domestic affection." Meanwhile, absence—the common cure—served but to strengthen the disease. The more Dudley saw of other women, the more did Janet's image brighten on his memory,' until the admiration which he hoped might have been weakened by other admirations, began gradually to take the shape of that deep and enduring sentiment, over which the accidents of life have no further power.

And long before the year of self-prescribed exile had passed away, Dudley had ceased to think of what he had been accustomed to call the *convenances*, and felt that life without Janet was but a bleak and colorless void, in which there was no home for heart or hope. A virtuous passion is a powerful refiner of the mind ; it filled his soul, and purified it from the dross which had alloyed its brightness. All the high qualities of his nature, all the warm feelings of his heart, were awakened ; he had risen above the prejudices that had impeded his happiness, he had

stripped them of their flimsy investments, and looked at them wondering to think how things of such small worth could even for a moment have retained his mind in their subjection. Not that in shaking off the influence of prejudice he became the contemner of established opinion ; on the contrary, he readily acknowledged its salutary influence, which so often opposes a barrier against rash, disgraceful, or ill-assorted marriages, inconsiderately formed, and, in general, eternally repented. But here was every thing but fashion, for fortune Dudley neither wanted nor thought of. His own was noble, and he had long discovered that increase of wealth, may sometimes be paid for in metal more precious than even gold itself : it was a choice approved by virtue, honorable to taste, and prodigal in promise of happiness, with nothing against it but the verdict of the jury in the *west*.

Dudley was now a changed man in every thing but his passion, and it would have been easier to have involved the gravest and most reflecting of mankind in the net from which he had just disengaged himself, than that he should have been again entangled in its snare. With a new heart, and yet an unchanged one, he journeyed homewards, passing along the beautiful shores of the Mediterranean, grand, and lone, and eastern in their loveliness, and through

the vineyards and olive-groves of France, to a village in the Bourbonnais, where he was seized with an attack of fever that at first menaced danger, and long resisted the means employed to subdue it. It seemed probable that he had caught it from a poor traveller who had dropped down on the road while asking alms of him, and whom he had supported to a place of shelter. This circumstance changed the whole course of events ; instead of arriving in London much within the year, he did not reach it till after Mrs. Brudenel's departure for the continent, and thus the moment of elucidation seemed lost forever.

An hour after his arrival, he was on his way to R——Street. As he walked along, a crowd of doubts, of fears that had never before disturbed him, assailed his mind. In so many months how much might have happened ! It is a fearful thing to return home after a long absence, thinking of the voices that bade farewell, and the eyes that looked it, and scarcely daring to ask one's hopes if they will be there to give the long estranged a welcome.

Dudley felt this, and fearfully. When he stood at the top of the street, he looked down through it ; his eye rested on Mrs. Brudenel's balcony,—there were no flowers there. This trivial circumstance disturbed him. As he advanced, he saw

two women who begged, under the pretext of selling matches, sitting on the step of the door, as if the house was unoccupied,—his alarm increased; he approached nearer, and the white paper on the windows at once put an end to a hope, which an hour before had seemed a certainty.

He knocked at the door, and a young woman who was at work in the parlor-window opened it to answer him, but she knew nothing of Mrs. Brudenel; she was not her servant, but only there to look after the house; all that she could tell was that Mrs. Brudenel was gone to France, and that the terms on which it was to be let had been left with Mr. Timson the upholsterer, who would give the gentleman further particulars. Dudley asked to see the house, and had again the happiness,—if under such circumstances it could be called one,—of sitting on the chair next to that which Janet used to occupy, and the grief of seeing hers vacant.

How powerful are local associations! An object remembered,—not from its own interest, but merely from its having been at a particular period habitually familiar to the eye,—becomes a key to the passions. The slightest, the most careless notices can unlock the springs of hope, dread, grief, regret, rapture; we listen with wonder to the story of the

Arabian necromancer who, breathing on the earth which he holds within his palm, scatters it on the ground, and sees a marble city filled with life rise up from a few grains of sand ; but the familiar miracle of memory, whose spell is some common sound, some every-day image, passes unmarvelled at, though not less wonderful than the magician's dust. The natural magic of the mind is like the mirror of that noted enchanter Cornelius Agrippa, which revealed to the accomplished Surrey the gracious form of the lady of his love,—the courtly Geraldine ; so did the little table, at which Janet usually worked or drew, recall her charming figure, her habitual attitude, the turn of her gracefully-placed head, and all the loved, endeared minutæ of look and accent to the mind of Dudley ; and while he stood upon a spot filled with the apparition of her beauty, the echo of her voice, it seemed to him as if the deep devotion with which he had worshipped her in absence were coldness compared with the entire and perfect love which at that moment filled his soul. The past was again the present. “ It seems but yesterday,” he said ; and then sinking backwards in his chair, added in a tone of self-reproval, “ and yet I left her ! ”

“ Would you please to see the other rooms, sir ? ” said his conductress, twirling her key impatiently, as

if to remind him that she had something else to do than to stand waiting on his fancies.

"Not at present," he said, starting from his reverie; "another time." And then putting four times as much into her hand as she expected, was down stairs before she had performed her curtsy.

Dudley passed but three days in England,—three inevitable days, that seemed to him to count their hours by ages, and then crossed over to Calais, having assured himself that Mrs. Brudenel was still in the French capital. He embarked on a moonlight evening, when the cry of the curlew was heard along the shore, and the line of the French coast seemed traced in blue and luminous vapor; and as he sat alone, looking from the side of the vessel forward to that coast which no longer seemed to him the boundary of a foreign land, things unspeakable passed through his mind, possessing it with sweet and ineffable melancholy. Assuredly the soul must have a language which the lips cannot utter! We may speak it, perhaps, in an other world, where the feelings, which are too fleeting and visionary to be concentrated into thought or expressed by words, but which, like a steam of subtle and commingled perfume, steal in through every crevice of his mind, may find their organ.

—XII.—

Dudley arrived at Paris on the evening of Madame d'Auberville's ball, passed her illuminated porch without noticing either flambeaux or gens d'armes, stopped at the Hotel de——, where he had been accustomed to lodge, and as he ascended the stairs was recognised by an old friend, who insisted on taking him to the countess's fete, where he would be sure to meet with some charming compatriotes. Dudley had just begun to frame an excuse, when the last word tingled on his ear, and produced a sudden and eager acquiescence. Indeed so sudden a one, that had not his friend been just at that moment seriously engaged in subduing a rebellious curl, it might have exposed him to no small share of raillery, a thing often more distressing even than reproof.

The little viscount, who was not a quadrille figure, and left (as he said) waltzing to attaches, and the galop to Hungarian magnates, stood, when Dudley entered, in the environs of a doorway in the full exercise of courtesy and vituperation. Dudley's name was already known to D'Auberville, who received him as one enjoying the reputation of a distinguished exclusive is sure to be received by

all ball-giving people, be they the best, the plainest, or even the wisest in the world. Many ladies passed, and all had a honied word, or a piquante a propos, from the junior master of the revels, who did not forget the aparte to his friend when they were out of hearing. All were spelt backwards; the fair were insipid, the dark fierce, the lively bold, the modest dull; one was spoilt by her ear, another by her chain. Mdlle. Vongutchen, the Flemish heiress, with the family ruby on her forehead, was a glow-worm,—all reptile but the gem; Madame de Clauzel Castri enamel on brass, like the Venus of an old-fashioned watch-case. The charming Honorine de Bar, missing her prince, had put on *le diabol de violet* even to the very color of her lips; and seeing La Baronne Minden, he exclaimed,—

“ Ah, gentle lover of forest glades! Sweet lady! only to be caught, like a green turtle, when the wind is still and the moon shining !”

“ But,” (said Dudley, interrupting an impromptu on symmetry,) “ beauty is not like faith ; its strength is not in its perfectness.”

“ True,” returned the viscount. “ Madame D——’s African nose does not stand in the way of her conquests ; and Du Bellay admires la jolie Lucille all the more for the protuberance on her

right shoulder. He says there cannot be too much of so charming a creature ; but my taste is more within bounds ; it does not exuberate beyond the more limited outline of the Duchess de B——, or your charming Lady R——, who looks at this moment like a blue and silver dream with a star on its forehead ; though Chavarney, who chose his wife as the conclave does the Pope,—for her air of caducity, says she is not angular enough to be intellectual. But talking of charms, there is a creature here to-night,—*(Dudley's heart beat)*—such a bird of beauty, such a queen-bee,—a very Oreade, one that might cross your path in a twilight forest,—for you are poetical, and doubtless favored by the wood nymphs,—or sing you into paradise on a green bank by moonlight."

"A married phoenix?"

"Heaven forefend ! No, no ; free, unrivetted, unappropriated ; with a delicious disdain of man-kind, and a maidenly blush when affronted by flimsy compliments. Even I am her slave, I who have honored millinery all my life, seeing the miracles it can work. But here she comes.

"Now on my life
A beauteous lady, fair of nature's gift,
And fairer still for being chastely set
In the bright circle of her purity."

At that moment the cold salute already mentioned passed between Dudley and Janet; and the viscount, starting up would have followed his Oreade to the seat to which her partner was leading her, when a tap on the shoulder obliged him to turn the other way.

Dudley watched from a distance Janet's movements. He saw her followed, admired, the divinity of the night; but natural and unconscious as in the obscurity of R—— Street would have approached, have spoken to her; but something in their respective situations, and perhaps her reserved manner, deterred him. He advanced towards Mrs. Brudenel; but the extreme coldness with which she returned his salute, rendered it impossible for him to address her without appearing intrusive, perhaps impertinent.

There was much in his conduct that required excuse. Of this he was painfully aware, but felt that a ball-room was not the fitting place for explanation. Besides, the position in which he now found Janet was so different from the one in which he had previously seen her: then she was like a pearl still enclosed within its shell, whose worth was only known to its first discoverer; no other eye had looked upon its beauty, no other voice appreciated its lustre. But now she was a crown

jewel, and to precipitate matters might have seemed like a movement of vanity, an effort to appropriate a gain whose value had risen on the favorable judgment of others.

In short, the proud, vain-glorious Dudley was humbled into caution. He wrote to Mrs. Brudenel, adopting the form prescribed by mere acquaintance, and requesting to be allowed to call upon her. The note was taken to another lady in the same hotel, (a mistake of frequent occurrence, who threw it into the fire. Dudley drew a bad omen from Mrs. Brudenel's silence; but determining to present himself at her door, arrived before it at the same moment with the Count de Murville. The latter entered with the authorized air of a person enjoying the privileges of intimacy; and Dudley, feeling that the moment was not a favorable one for his first appearance, withdrew.

That evening he went to the Italian Opera. Janet was not there; but on descending the staircase, he saw Mrs. Brudenel immediately before him. She was with the Countess d'Auberville, and as she passed, several persons addressed her in a tone of felicitation. Dudley drew nearer. The approaching marriage of Miss Hamilton was spoken of; aware of his vicinity, Mrs. Brudenel received the congratulations of her acquaintances as if there

had been cause for them. It was before Janet had been consulted on the subject of the count's addresses, and while her aunt indulged the most sanguine hope of their being accepted ; besides, the opportunity of mortifying Dudley was not to be resisted, and she certainly used her power to its utmost extent.

Dudley had heard all. Hope in the human heart, at least in the young heart,—is like the blossom in the paradise of Du Bartas, where

“Les fleurs étoilées
Vives, sautillent plus, plus elles sont foulées.”

But in his, the elastic power was lost, the springs relaxed and incapable of action ; and the dreams, credulously accepted, sanguinely cherished, seemed as he listened to fall into a shapeless heap, like the card-built castle of a child when a sudden breath blows upon it.

He would have quitted Paris instantly, but that his sister, whom he fondly loved, was on her way to meet him there ; and in her delicate and most forlorn situation, to have withdrawn from her the only protection of which she could honorably avail herself, would have been inhuman. But he could not endure to remain in a place where he was every moment exposed to the chance of meeting her, who though no longer an object of hope, was more than

ever one of profound and unextinguishable tenderness; and still worse misery,—to see with her the happy, the accepted lover, whose pride, more nobly set than Dudley's vanity, had placed its glory in possessing the rich treasure of her pure and beautiful heart.

He went into the near country, and looking about for a lonely spot, found it in the forest of Montmorency, where he remained for some time without knowing that she whom he loved and shunned lived on the edge of the same forest, in the white cottage under the chesnut-trees which he had so often passed in his moonlight rambles. At length he learned it; and having at the same time ascertained that the Count de Murville visited there daily, and that his marriage with Janet was to take place in a few weeks he went out again from his solitude.

About this time, a last attempt which Dudley had made to reconcile his unfortunate sister to her husband utterly failed, and he now proposed that they should travel southwards. Nature, he thought, might be more merciful to her than man, and the scenery and climate of the south he hoped might amuse her mind, and perhaps arrest the progress of the melancholy malady with which she now seemed unhappily affected.

They journeyed on,—he with a vacillating but

often buoyant hope, she with a sadder certainty. His tender and sanguine nature dwelt earnestly on the belief, that one so young must have the germ of existence too strong within her, to be crushed out of life by unkindness. He had forgotten that it is with fulness the heart bursts ; and that as years advance, the swelling tide of passion subsides within its boundaries, and all that yet remains within the breast finds room.

The change of scene did nothing, and the air of the south, on which Dudley had so fondly counted, nothing either. Is there on earth a task so heart-rending as that of watching the slow decay of nature in a being whom we tenderly love ? to see the dear pale face dressing itself in smiles to cheat the eye of affection ? to hear the languid voice faintly uttering the last expressions of gratitude or fondness ? to behold youth going down into the tomb with all its withered hopes and broken illusions,—the warm and faithful heart mouldering into dust, and the once-praised features sunk and discolored ? There are other griefs sharp and excruciating, but this one mocks them all !

Many a lonely night did Dudley sit by the bedside of his sister, when all stood still but time and death, counting the ticking of the clock lest the hour of administering the draught in which none

but himself had hope, should pass unheeded; and watching the lingering but sure progress of the terrible enemy whose visible presence his heart tried to deny, though his reason fearfully and tremblingly acknowledged it.

All Hyeres talked with pity of the poor English lady, so young and so fair, who had come there—as it was thought—to rest for ever; and of the brother who watched her with such love, and who would not suffer that another than himself should help or serve her, whose eyes seemed to have no other office but to gaze upon her face and mark its hectic changes, and who looked himself as if, when she was gone, he would not linger long behind. Every one who passed by the low fence of their cottage-garden, and saw him supporting her faint steps reduced again to the feebleness of infancy, or drawing the chair in which he had carefully placed her along the sunniest path in the vineyard, gave them a kind wish or a blessing, and sometimes a tear with it. Even the physician, schooled as he was to such scenes, turned away from his anxious quivering smile when Dudley said tremblingly, “One does not die with such a beautiful red in the cheeks, O no; we are sure of that,” and then paused, as if to catch the confirmation of his haggard hope.

But that fair and sorrowful creature sleeps at last!

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sorrowful creature sleeps at last

no
done

The broken heart is still, the complaint of abused affection silent, and he who watched beside her, now sheds bitter tears upon her foreign grave, where he alone is mourner.

"It is of such that heaven makes angels!" said Dudley, as he looked upon it; "and I who have lost her must make this my consolation. Farewell, my Emily! dear sister and sole friend, farewell for ever! On this side heaven we shall meet no more; but your spirit will hover over me, that spirit sustained and purified by faith and sorrow, and now made company for angels."

Some children came to gather blossoms from a bush that grew beside the grave: the fresh leaves fell from their hands upon it. Dudley knelt down and kissed the stone upon which the name and age of her who slept beneath it, were inscribed, and then with an uncertain hand traced these words:—

"She too was gathered in her beauty, and her sweetness is scattered like the leaves of the desert."

The children drew back a few steps, with that instinctive feeling of respect with which affliction inspires even infancy; and Dudley, again pressing his lips to the stone, repeated in a tremulous voice, "Farewell for the last time, my sister! Your brother leaves you here in loneliness,—loved and lamented one!" and then rising up from the grave, retraced his steps to his desolate dwelling.

As he departed, the children gathered round the grave to read what the stranger had written; but it was in a language unknown to them, and they looked but they could not understand it. But they understood its sorrow, and she who seemed the eldest, knelt upon the turf, and repeated the prayer which she had been taught to say over the grave of her mother.

—XIII.—

It was the 29th of July, and there was fighting in the streets of Paris, and cannon in its thronged places, and the dead lay heaped about just as the bullets and the balls had left them, and good people, who feared not to practise charity in the midst of death and danger, opened their doors to the wounded and the dying, nothing terrified by the appalling aspects—gashed and grim—of the victims. It was in the evening, a little before sunset, that a woman who had been thrown down and wounded in the trample, was taken into a house in the Faubourg St. Honore, where she was placed upon a bed and left to the care of the charitable inhabitants of an apartment on the Rez de Chaussee. Soon after a young man was brought into the same house in an

almost lifeless state, from a blow given with the butt end of a musket.

As he was borne through the room where the woman lay, he opened his eyes languidly, looked towards her, but closed them again immediately, as if life was extinct. The bearers laid him on a couch in an adjoining chamber, and then left him to the care of a surgeon, whom humanity had detained upon the spot.

It was long before the efforts of the latter were successful, but at length life seemed to return slowly; a fluttering pulse, a little colour in the lips, a low interrupted breathing gave hope that the danger was less eminent than the surgeon had at first apprehended it to be. Another hour elapsed, and the young man, who had been during that time gradually reviving, opened his eyes, and looking round with a confused stare, fixed them on the door which communicated with the outward chamber, and which had been left half open for the sake of air. On a bed within that room was placed the woman who had been wounded, and beside her knelt another female, who appeared busied in fastening a bandage round the forehead of the one who lay, as it seemed, dying. It was evening,—almost night, so that the chamber, in which there was as yet no lamp, was but imperfectly lighted.

"Who is that woman?" said the young man, awakening as if from a dream. "Why does she kneel there,—always in the same spot?"

The surgeon, dreading excitement, closed the door gently, and the young man sunk again into a troubled sleep.

As night advanced the fever diminished; he breathed more freely, and his sleep became calm. The surgeon felt his pulse, found it softer and less wavering: and having many dependant on his care, left a person to watch by his bedside, and went to look after his other patients. The night as many must remember, was more than usually sultry even for the season, and the person who watched, oppressed by heat, opened the door between the two chambers: there was no noise, the same figure lay upon the bed, and the other woman sat beside it.

Soon after the young man awoke, complaining of thirst; and while the attendant gave him some cooling beverage, his eyes again wandered to the half-open door.

"Still there!" he exclaimed, "always that woman! Years ago she was there—in the same spot. It was evening then; I put her in the grave myself—now the lamps burn, and still she is there. Who is she?"

The attendant did as the surgeon had done

before,—closed the door gently, and the young man fell asleep.

As the night waned, noises were heard in the adjoining chamber, and voices as of persons in prayer, and now and then a sound of weeping, and last of all, silence as of death. But the young man heard nothing, for he slept profoundly until a late hour the next day; and when the surgeon came, his pulse was quiet, and no ill effect remained from the blow which he had received, except a sense of extreme weakness. His mind was now perfectly collected, and he inquired anxiously where he was, and how it came that he found himself in a room the aspect of which was strange to him.

The surgeon explained the circumstance of his having received a blow, and being left in a senseless state on the pavement until succored by the benevolent persons under whose roof he then was. The stranger expressed a deep sense of the kindness he had received, and then called to mind that having arrived at Paris on the 29th, he had thoughtlessly ventured into the streets, had got involved in the crowd, seen the gens d'armes advance, and had then probably received the blow, as he had no farther recollection of what had passed.

“But,” continued he, “last night I thought that there were people here, and that I saw a woman

who knelt beside another who was dying; but afterwards, it seemed to me as if both were figures on a tombstone. But I am come," he added in a tone of profound feeling, "from the death-bed and the grave, and my mind is full of sad and gloomy fancies."

"In the present instance," replied the surgeon, "fancy has had nothing to do: what you speak of, really existed. In that chamber," he added, pointing to the closed door, "a young woman died last night. She had been benevolently employed in assisting an unfortunate person who lay wounded within the porch of the hotel immediately opposite, and in crossing the street was run down by a horseman and received a hurt, the consequences of which proved fatal."

"She died, you say," exclaimed the young man, painfully agitated, "and she who watched beside her?"

"Was an inhabitant of this house, who appears to have had some knowledge of the deceased, though she was brought here entirely by accident. As it is impossible in the present confusion to have the corpse carried to a place of interment, the proprietor of the garden beneath your window has allowed that it should be deposited there for the present, and this evening it will be laid in the spot where

you may now, if you will raise yourself a little, see the newly turned-up earth." Then, without appearing to notice the agitation of his patient, he added, "The lady, in whose apartment you are, has been often at your door this morning to make inquiries, but would not enter as you slept. This evening, if you continue improving as you have done for the last few hours, you may perhaps (after the melancholy ceremony is over) find yourself strong enough to receive her friendly visit."

The young man expressed an earnest desire to do so, and the surgeon seeing that his immediate assistance was no longer necessary, took his leave.

The stranger raised himself upon his couch, which was placed close to the window, and looked out upon the garden and the new-made grave. It was a melancholy garden, such a one as may still be sometimes met with even in the populous quarters of Paris; partly enclosed by a long dull line of building, and partly by a wall of disproportioned height tapestried with dark ivy. The grass was long and foul, the paths choked with weeds and obstructed with brambles; here and there was a bud, or a berry, or a flower, that had outlived neglect, or a mutilated statue that had yielded to it. Few things can look more desolate than a mutilated stature, when the features have escaped by

chance and still retain their original expression. In the middle of this weed-grown-garden, was a fountain without water,—a large paved basin fringed with melancholy nettles and still more melancholy trees, leafless even in summer, with two useless lions couchéd under a dark arch ; and above, two loving deities smilling tenderly and looking woingly upon each other, while their fractured limbs lay scattered about, and the evening air moaned dolefully through their shattered bodies. A cold moonlight would have made spectres of them.

It was a lonely scene, and as evening darkened on, it became a gloomy one. There is always something forbidding in the contrast of past splendor and present degradation. The silence of a primeval forest, into whose depths the axe has not yet worked its way, where green birds and scarlet hang from the branches, balancing their suspended bodies in the pleasant apathy of certain safety, while others with small fly-like forms, feathered as it were with fire, shoot between the boughs like wandering stars, has still the virgin grandeur of a fresh creation unmixed with meaner images upon it. The loneliness of the desert, the solitude of the sea-shore, people the mind with fancies ; “ millions of spiritual creatures walk abroad ;” we hold communion with angels,—with the dead whom we have loved on

earth, and the absent to whom our hearts are faithful. But this was town desolation, a vestige of artificial splendor trampled into meanness,—all but the hasty and unblest grave! That worked upon the mind's magic and the young man gazed upon it until his eyes grew dim, and he could look no longer.

Suddenly, a coming and going in the adjoining chamber, and a noise as if of feet slipping under a heavy weight, roused him from his deep abstraction. He looked from his window; it was but a few steps above the level of the garden, but the grave was at the far-off side, and under a large tree whose boughs obscured all but the earth beneath it. Presently, the gate opened, and two men appeared bearing a coffin, hastily put together of a few ill-assorted boards, and covered with a white linen cloth; two women followed closely veiled, and enveloped in dark mantles that entirely concealed their forms. It was now dusk; the women approached the grave, and kneeling down beside it, one of them read from a book, while the bearers, having lowered the coffin two or three feet below the surface of the earth stood uncovered beside it.

The women continued on their knees some minutes, and then both rising, strewed flowers, which they appeared to have brought with them

for the purpose, on the lid of the coffin ; and the bearers having covered it with earth, all returned as they had entered, the women gliding behind the shadow of the trees, and holding their handkerchiefs to their eyes as if deeply affected. A strange shuddering came over the young man, a thought that made his heart sink and his knees knock together.

"How is it with you, sir ?" inquired the surgeon, who at that moment opened the door ; "not the better, I fear, for the gloomy scene you have just witnessed."

"For the love of heaven, sir," said the stranger, without heeding his question, "tell me who it was ! I think I know the person who walked at this side. Who was it, I entreat you, they have just now buried in that grave ?"

The surgeon looked surprised, but he was a calm man, and accustomed to witness every variety of feverish excitement.

"Who was it ?" repeated the stranger impatiently.

"One," replied the surgeon, "of whom you could have known nothing."

The young man took both his hands, and wringing them within his own, said in a deep struggling voice, "I would give all that I possess on earth to make that sure."

"I know not what your interest may be," interrupted the surgeon calmly, but with feeling; "but I hope and believe, that you are mistaken. The person whom you saw committed to the earth was—"

"A stranger?"

"No; a sister of charity, one from the neighborhood of St. Denis. She had been going about all the morning amongst the wounded, and met her death in the courageous performance of her duties."

—XIV.—

"Poor Sister Mathurine need I say that it was over her sorrows the grave had closed, and that it was Janet who had knelt and prayed beside her? And the young man,—already have those who have patiently followed his story pronounced the name of Dudley. Yes, it was Dudley, and the apartment into which he had been borne was Mrs. Brudenel's. From the position of the two females at the grave, the one who knelt nearest to him, entirely obscured the figure of her companion; in that one he believed that he traced the form of Mrs. Brudenel. It was indeed herself; but the young woman who died in the night, she for whom the grave had just opened, the ministering angel whose last act was one of mer-

cy, who was she? There was his doubt—his terrible dread.

Need I say more? I think not. It would be useless to describe—because all will understand it—the feeling with which Dudley awaited the surgeon's answer, when he questioned him as to the name which the younger lady bore, or the ecstasy of joy with which he heard her maiden one,—the dear, the familiar,—the one written in his heart, pronounced. Then came the meeting, and the explanation and self-upbraidings, and pardon, and hope, and last of all,—certainty.

They are married,—with all the promise of enduring happiness which affection tried in the crucible, an entire confidence in each other's love, and a heartfelt pride in each other's excellencies, can give.

"What a magnificent pair they are!" exclaimed Mrs. Brudenel in the delight of her heart, as they returned from the ceremony. "It is downright joy to gaze at them."

"Such looks presage happiness," said the Count d'Auberville, who as the friend of Janet's father gave her away; "may they—and my foresight tells me that they will—be prophetic. And as

a note of good augury," he added in a low voice to Mrs. Brudenel, "I have had news of De Merville. I know how you have suffered for him; but your heart may be at rest. He has returned in safety and with honor,—time, we hope, will do the rest."

"Time and my example," cried the little viscount, who had caught the last word, and who—always declaring himself the most miserable of men—assisted at the nuptial ceremony, wrote the epithalamium; and taking his desolation to an ambassador's ball, kneaded it into a madrigal to excite the sympathy of a new goddess, the tip of whose nose he had just discovered to be modelled after the true Cleopatra pattern.

THE STORY OF FIAMMETTA.

My mind misgives ;
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels.

Shakspeare.

—THE girl sat upon a stone by the road-side, just at the entrance of the town of Mayence ; and as passengers crossed the bridge, she asked alms of them in a soft low voice, and with an accent which seemed to belong to another country, looking boldly but not immodestly in their faces, with the expression of one noble by nature, but made importunate by want or evil association. Few noticed her, and of those who did, some jeered, and others reproved her as an idle baggage, who loved begging better than work ; asking her how many mothers she had at home lying ill of the fever, or whether it was off of the roof, or into the fire that her father had tumbled. To which unfeeling jesting she made no answer ;

but turning away sorrowfully, drew the hood of her tattered cloak still closer over her face, down which tears stole silently, and seemed as if afraid to repeat her doleful petition.

One alone appeared touched by her pale cheek, and the speaking wretchedness of her torn garments which hung in shreds upon her: it was a widow of humble rank, with an infant in her arms. She thought, perhaps, of what might one day befall her own child,—a mother's heart is always compassionate,—and as she approached the girl, I approached also to listen to her story.

She had come (she said) from the mountains of Carpathia with a troop of Zingaras, who had stolen her from her parents when she was an infant. Of those parents she knew no more than that they were travellers of seeming note, who had been way-laid in a forest: none had ever spoken to her of their after fate. But there was in the gang a woman who had nursed and loved, and been a mother to her; this woman had a husband, upon whom some heavy distress had fallen, and he, to save her from the miseries of want, had robbed. It was his first crime,—hunger had driven him to it: he was discovered, tried, and condemned to a long and unshared imprisonment;

Immured within the dungeons of Buba, in dark-

ness and in solitude, he gave himself up to despair ; but his wife still hoped with all the fond tenacity of woman's love ; and she went daily to the gate of the prison, and stood before it, and looked upon its walls, and thought—and prayed inwardly.

At last help was given her, and she freed him from his bondage. They fled together to the mountains, and as they sat one day steeping their last crust in the water of the way-side pool, the Zingaras fell in with them, gave them shelter, and made them of their band. The man took to their ways, and became fierce and lawless, but the woman (who was called Naomi) remembered God ; and having lost her own baby, took the poor infant of the way-laid parents to her bosom, and was as a mother to her ; and as she grew into childhood and understanding, kept her always near to herself, hiding her—as it were—from the rest of the crew, and teaching her the christian prayers, which had perhaps never before been heard in their wild solitudes.

And thus they lived, from year to year ; sometimes encamped in lonely forests, or hidden in the caverns of the rocks ; sometimes divided into small bands and hanging about the suburbs of cities, or subsisting on the credulity of the simple people of the hamlets, making their way through many coun-

tries but their home in none. It was in one of their wanderings, that as they journeyed by the moon-shine from the Black Forest towards the countries of the Rhine, the good Naomi fell ill ; and the band, forced to continue their march, left her in a hut by the way-side, with only the poor girl to nurse and watch her ; and there she had died, and some peasants of the Bergstrasse had buried her. The girl had then fallen ill,—of grief, she said, and tears gushed from her eyes in streams while she told of it, —but she was better now ; and having none to help her was begging her way to Cologne where she expected to meet the Zingaras, who were the only human beings she knew, or had any claim upon.

The story was told in a simple way without trick or whine ; it was obviously not the gabbled tale of a practised beggar, and while she fixed her wild bright eyes in the woman's face, beseeching her pity by a look of severish earnestness, I found mine grow misty and my hand glide mechanically into my pocket.

She was as pretty as so sick and wan a thing could be, with a melancholy maturity in her eyes, strangely at variance with the childish, even infantine expression, that lurked about the corners of her beautiful mouth. I gave her money, but the woman did much more,—she offered her an asylum ;

and having asked her age, and learned that it was eight or thereabouts,—as well as her mother Naomi could guess, she added with the quick consideration which a kind heart furnishes, “My poor child, you must think no more of the Zingaras; their wild society is not fit for such as you are. Come with me; eat and repose, and then we shall see what means can be found to employ you in usefulness and honor.”

“No more Zingaras!” exclaimed the girl; “no more Zingaras! O joy! Dear woman—good lady! O, I had such fear, such sorrow at the thought of going to them,” and down she sunk on her knees, and seizing the good woman’s cloak, kissed it with rapture, and laughed wildly, and burst into tears, and struggled with the spasmodic workings in her throat that almost choked her, till her emotion became contagious, and scarcely a dry eye was to be seen in the crowd which now gathered round us.

This incident and the consequent arrangements into which I entered with the kind and judicious Margaret Wenzler for the poor child’s future support and instruction, detained me a considerable time at Mayence; and in that time her character had developed itself so interestingly,—she was so good, so beautiful, so helpless, that what was at first a work of charity, became at length one of

love. I loved Fiammetta, dearly,—tenderly loved her, with something of a brother's affection. I never had a sister, but it seemed to me as if the interest which I felt for her, was of a near kin in its purity—I may almost say holiness, to that sacred feeling.

At length I quitted Mayence, and following lazily the windings of the Rhine, came up, near to Dusseldorf, with the troop of Zingaras to whom Fiammetta's protectress had belonged,—a fierce banditti, bold and lawless, at war with the restrictions of society, but obsequious ministers to the vices and weaknesses of man. Virtuous Naomi ! how my heart blessed her name who had so carefully screened the poor Fiammetta from such guilty contact, for she knew of nothing but the glens and forests, the simple and romantic features of their rude life ; she remembered their moonlight encampments, their day-break marches, the long hours when she had watched and worked with Naomi ; their wild looks had often frightened her, but she knew nothing of their wilder lives. The vigilance of affection had saved her from acquaintance with vice, or even from the knowledge of its existence.

I stopped in the midst of the troop. A tall woman, whose gaudy vest was coarsely decorated with barbaric finery and hung with small bells that jingled as she moved, strode towards me, and advancing her fearful eyes into my face, offered in the rude jargon of the tribe, to tell me whether the lady of my love hunted or hawked that day. Then suddenly stopping, and spelling the lines of my countenance with intense and searching interest, "Out into the desert! (she cried,) out into the desert! The ban is on thee, marked and miserable!" Then raising her skinny hands above the crimson folds of her headcloth, while live fire seemed to flash from her superhuman eyes, she remained an instant motionless. The next moment her lips quivered, her eyes looked inwards, as if communing with her deadly thoughts, a thick moisture covered her sallow forehead, the skinny hands were lowered slowly and heavily, and something of the iron rigor of her look passed away while in a hollow and unnatural voice she pronounced the awful anathema.

"Woe unto thee, fated one! woe unto thee! The brand is on thee; the spotted pard is at thy heels; the howl is up, and the red moon rings to the echo! Keep to the desert—keep to the desert; tread not on marble floors, nor let gilded canopies cover thee. There's music in the air; there's joy, there's

revelry ; it is the last song ! She's there—she stalks by—death's in her foul glance. Off to the desert, woful one ! off to the desert ! The strong hand is on thee ; it drags thee down—down—down.” And then with a wild shout that sounded like the clamor of a hundred voices, she fled into the woods, leaving me more fearfully impressed than I cared to acknowledge.

A handsome girl, who was gathering up her heavy hair under a band of white linen, called to me, and said in a frightened accent, “What has Kezia told thee?” Then approaching nearer, “She is the wicked one ; the raven and the skull are hers ; listen to me.”

I did so ; a weak and superstitious feeling mastered my better reason. One skilled like Kezia, could have worked me up to the wildest pitch of credulity, but the young sibyl was only a beginner. I saw her set her features to a pitch of artificial immobility, as if she waited the workings of the spirit ; and when, with the professional wheedle of the tribe, she said, “Give me money ; he will not speak else,” I turned away in disgust, ashamed of the emotion which these juggling impostors had stirred up within me, and blessing that Providence which had preserved the dear Fiammetta from their terrific influence.

And yet the ban of the wild woman often sounded in my ear startlingly ; and often when I have made one in a crowd of courtly revellers, a sudden reminiscence has crossed me, and my heart has shrunk as from the gripe of something deadly. But time passed on, and at length I thought no more of it.

Twice every year I visited Mayence, and passed some time in the neighborhood of Fiammetta's dwelling. How fair she grew, and how I loved her ! loved her for what she was, and for what I had done for her. Any one would have done the same ; it was pure self-gratification, and yet there was something intoxicating in the feeling of having been instrumental to her preservation, in calling myself her sole friend on earth, excepting only Margaret.

Circumstances at length occurred, over which I had no control, that detained me in a distant spot for two long years. In that interval, Margaret's child, a sickly and ailing infant died, and Fiammetta became in her turn her comforter. I wrote frequently, but suddenly they who had always been scrupulously punctual in their answers, became silent. Five months elapsed, and still I heard nothing of them ; I became alarmed, my heart foreboded evil, I could no longer endure the irritation of suspense ; so I turned my face once more towards the

Rhine, and arriving late at night at Mayence, stopped before the gate of an inn at no great distance from the abode of Fiammetta.

Lights still burned in the hall, and five or six guests still lingered sleepily round the public table. I took my station in a corner far apart from their neighborhood, called for wine of the best Rhenish growth, and insured the host's communicativeness by inviting him to partake of it with me; and then, while my heart beat and my voice trembled, turned the conversation into a channel which soon led to the inquiries I panted to make.

The landlord knew them well, both Margaret and her daughter,—for so from habit he called Fiammetta, though he as well as all the townsfolk of Mayence had heard her story. “She was (he said) the handsomest maiden in the whole Electorate,—ay, or the Palatinate to boot,—and as virtuous as she was fair; proud too, and with the port of a princess, yet kind and gentle, so that all who knew her, had something good to say of her. But she had a sure mark to go by, (he added,) for a more prudent or a more pious woman lived not in Mayence than Margaret Wenzler; none could say ill of her, and that made the wonder all the greater when they disappeared.”

“How!” I exclaimed, “disappeared?”

"Ay," continued he, "and all in a moment, as a star falls."

My heart sunk at the comparison.

"Had it been Martha Heidegger and her bold daughter Meichen, (said he,) none would have wondered; but Margaret and Fiammetta! that modest child, who blushed up to the eyes if any one praised her beauty."

"But how?" said I, horror-struck. "Is there no clue? has no light been thrown on this strange affair?"

"Light, do you say?" returned the hostess, who sat spinning beside the stove; "ay, light enough has been thrown upon it, but it's the light of darkness. However there are those who can read by it as well as by the best lamp.—But I am no scandal-monger,—only I would say, that she who makes a hard bed should lie on it; and that a young maiden who encourages strollers, is a fair mark for a free tongue."

"Say a foul one," interrupted the host indignantly. Then turning to me, he added, "Better wear out than rust out,—that's the women's motto when the organ of speech is in question. But the truth is, that a stranger came this way, who chanced to see Fiammetta; he followed her, and she shunned him. It might be that her reserve quick-

ened his passion, for he hired a room in old Balthazar's house and there he passed whole days,—ay, and nights too, gazing on her chamber-window. It was but a bird's-eye view after all; but these young romancers can see through a stone wall, if there be but a pair of bright eyes at the other side of it. However, he quitted Mayence at last, and was not seen for a full twelvemonth; when, on a Candlemas-eve, (I remember it well,) just as I turned round an abrupt corner not ten yards from Margaret's dwelling, a whisking wind drove him right against me. But he soon disappeared as he had done before, and about the same time Margaret paid the tithe that she owed,—it was but a trifle, for she was always an orderly and prudent woman,—and from that hour neither herself nor Fiammetta, have been either seen or heard of.

It would be useless to detail the additional comments of the honest landlord, or the less merciful conjectures of his wife; or to enumerate the fruitless researches which I continued to make until hope was extinct within me, and nothing remained but the bitterness of self-reproach,—for had I not fostered and then neglected her? not voluntarily, it was true, but still in fact.

And yet she was most dear to me, and still dearer for the sweet and gentle recollections awak-

ened by the sight of the house where she had dwelt. Alas ! as we close the golden legend of hope, the book of memory opens of itself. Every day I visited the chamber that had been her own particular habitation. It was small, and entirely turned away from the bustle of the town, with a large walnut-tree spread out before its only window ; and beneath, a narrow garden, green and lonely, but full of sweet-smelling flowers carefully fostered into luxuriance.

It was just as she had left it,—the small white couch within its neat recess, the little silk slippers beside it, the modest book-shelves simply arranged, the table covered with a fine cloth, and strewed with fragments of paper, pencils, flowers pressed between blank leaves, and drawings indifferently executed, but gracefully conceived : in short, all the evidences of female occupation remained, but she herself was gone—gone ! and whither ? Perhaps betrayed to guilt and wretchedness, while I had loitered on, wasting in childish murmurs my ineffectual tenderness.

Daily, and for hours together, I used to sit buried in that vague abstraction, which is not thought because it has neither direction or consistency, gazing on whatever object fell beneath my eye, without remembering where I was, or knowing

what I looked at. One day I took up a book mechanically; a paper fell from it, it was a drawing of Fiammetta's, a likeness of herself, sketched with more skill than I believed her to possess; and on the margin was written, "For my dear master." It was thus that, as the director of her studies, she used from her childhood to call me; and the softness with which she used to pronounce a word, stern in its ordinary bearing, had made its sound precious and pleasant to my ear. If I had not already begun to suspect the weakness of my heart, the emotion which this little incident caused me would have opened my eyes; but the same moment which had revealed to me Fiammetta's flight, had taught me a secret of which I had long been the unconscious possessor.

I became master of the house, giving the owner what he wished for it, for I could not bear that the hand of a stranger should displace any thing which Fiammetta's had arranged; and then I quitted Mayence, lured southwards by an idle invention, a false hope which ended in disappointment. Foiled in the expectation which had led me across the Alps, I retraced my steps through the valleys of

the Tyrol, first turning from my path to visit Venice ; and this I was induced to do by some words dropped by a stranger, with whom I chanced to talk in a coffee-house at Brescia.

This youth was (as he said) a student of Padua, who having lately been for his pleasure at Venice, had there seen a lady descend from the piazzetta into her gondola, whose image seemed to possess his wild and passionate nature with the power of an enchantment. She was accompanied by a cavalier, and their fleet boat had shot off silently along the canal of the Giudeca, and had been lost to his sight before he could disengage himself from a companion who hung upon him, enter another, and pursue it. But the memory of her beauty had not escaped from his mind ; and he reproduced it with a glow and freshness, but above all an identity, which seemed to give back the figure of Fiammetta. She had spoken but two words, and those of common import, but the accent (he said) was marked enough to assure him it was foreign ; and then he repeated them again and again, until his voice seemed to have caught the very trick of her own low and peculiar organ.

On this weak hope I sped to Venice, that fair city of the sea, which seems to have no root in the earth, but to float to the music of those sweet sym-

phonies that swell for ever within it. There again I was disappointed, as I was often afterwards by false hopes born of my own wishes. But on that part of my story I shall be silent ; it is enough to say, that after a dreary winter fruitlessly passed amongst the Styrian mountains, I descended from my lonely hiding-place, and journeying onwards from town to town, arrived in the city of Leipsic late one afternoon, and stopping at the inn of the Saxische Hof, inquired for accommodation for the night. A small chamber was yielded to me with difficulty, the house being full to overflowing ; but as it was not to be vacant for an hour, I was fain to content myself with a bench in the public room where many people were assembled, all busily discussing, with the vehement energy of contending opinions, some subject apparently of general interest. Crowds passed the windows, carriages poured in from all quarters, all was uproar, anxiety, and confusion.

"No doubt," said I, addressing myself to a young man who sat near me, "this is the eve of the great fair?"

"One might well think so," he replied, "by the press and bustle. But whence comest thou, pilgrim?" added he gaily. "Is't from Jerusalem? or perhaps farther off? For else thou wouldest have known that the famous Zingara girl plays to-

night ; and that moreover the Prince Albert, own nephew to the noble Duke of Hunenstadt who is sojourning here, and his fair young wife, are coming to look at her."

" And who is this famous Zingara ? " I asked, while a strange dread came over me.

" Who is this Zingara ! " he exclaimed. " By the saints, my friend, you can hardly be of this world, and not have heard of her. Why she is the first actress of the Dresden company, and better still, the greatest beauty in the empire. She has been to Vienna to play before the court, and all the princes are mad for her. Ah, she is a bright creature, and a wild one, I promise you."

" And her name ? " said I tremblingly.

" O, for that," replied my neighbour, " she calls herself Zoraida ; but these folks have many names, and the real one may be far off yet. But if you care to see her, you must lose no time ; for this is the first night of her playing since she has come back to us, and seats must be bought with gold."

And speaking thus, he rose ; and I rose likewise and followed him instinctively to the entrance of the theatre.

The door was already blocked, but he pushed on boldly. At length we forced our way in, and having wedged ourselves into an obscure and

distant corner, previously occupied by two persons who for a large temptation had suffered themselves to be displaced, waited for the opening of the play.

And how did I await it? O torment inexpressible! O uncertainty, a thousand times more cruel than the defined and palpable reality, with what images of guilt and degradation did you harass and distract my mind! What thoughts fermented within it—formless and frightful! To force myself out of this horrible state, I drew my treasure—the likeness of Fiammetta—from my bosom, and while I gazed upon it, my companion, unobserved by me, gazed also; but no sooner had his eye caught a glance of the figure, than he exclaimed,

“By Saint Boniface, thou wert too many for me! Why thou hast her there, the Zingara! and as like as a pattern taken against a window glass. And thou wouldst fain learn her name?” continued he, with an aping of simplicity. “Ah, ah! you quiet ones are always too keen for us wags.” And so he ran on, confirming my worst fears, while my heart started and sunk at every noise that came from the still curtained stage.

I would have given worlds to have rushed out into the open air, to have felt the wind hurrying me fiercely forward, for my distracted mind and

cribbed position made almost madness together. I had now the all but certainty that Fiammetta and Zoraida were one: and yet I did not believe it. I seemed to have two separate intelligencies within me. I expected that when the curtain rose I should behold her; I felt as if there could be no doubt of it, and yet I did not think it possible. In short, I no longer knew what I thought; it seemed as if the tumultuous beatings of my heart prevented me from hearing the whisperings of my reason. All this sounds like madness, perhaps it was so.

I was roused from this frightful state by a sudden movement in the audience; all eyes were turned towards the duke's box. A moment after he appeared, leading in the young wife of his nephew the Prince Albert, who followed him. The lady advanced for a moment to the front of the box, and then placed herself a little behind the fold of a curtain, so that from where I sat nothing was visible but the turn of the head, and a fair shoulder with some dark ringlets falling like shadows on its whiteness; but what was she to me,—nothing; so I turned away, and fixed my eyes on the curtain.

It rose slowly; a murmur of impatience, a shout of welcome was heard, and then a deafening peal

of applause. A tall and dazzling figure advanced from the back of the stage and bowed slightly, with a hurried motion of the head—wild but graceful,—and rather expressive of disdain than gratitude. At the same moment Prince Albert rose from his seat, and whispering something in the duke's ear, quitted the box.

This I learned afterwards from my companion, for I saw nothing. I stood there like one electrified, not comprehending the shock that had almost annihilated me, my horrible apprehensions all confirmed, and she in whom I had garnered my heart's hopes, blasted and shamed before me! It seemed indeed Fiammetta; taller greatly than when I had left her,—but that, of course,—and darker,—but that too might be; my distance from her was great, and the light between us glaring,—I could not see distinctly.

My first emotion was rage—unmixed rage; there was no pardon, no compassion. I would have rushed out of the house, but every avenue was obstructed. I chased like a wild beast at bay; my fingers were contorted, my limbs sunk under me. I sat down and hid my face; and then she spoke, and I pitied her,—my tears fell. The voice was not her natural one, it was another,—ruder and more sad. Its sound, too, was far from me, and faint; but I remembered

how sweet it used to be in the innocent days that were gone for ever !

My feelings seemed to have changed suddenly ; it was no longer anger, but compassion, and O how deep and real ! I looked again at the stage ; my eyes had become accustomed to the light, or perhaps it burned more dimly. I know not, but she seemed to come nearer to me. I saw her plainly,—there was a strange look in her eyes ; it was not the look of Fiammetta, but,—and O with what sorrow did the thought oppress me ! she was not herself the same ; and how could she—no longer the pure, the virtuous—look as she once had done ?

At length the play ended,—I knew not how ; and hurrying out, I returned to the inn, shut myself up in my chamber, and passed hours of ineffable wretchedness.

There was thunder in the night,—I shall never forget it. First, a distant peal ; but growing louder as it approached, and then bursting over the city like the explosion of some dread machinery worked by demons. Then there was a dead silence, no life in leaf or grass, nor breath in any thing. I thought the sky grew clearer, when suddenly there came an uproarious storm, driving as if from every part of

the heavens at once ; two old trees that stood before my windows swung about and shook down their heavy branches as if they were dry leaves, and the tempest blew against them, and forced their stout boughs together, and brought darkness ; and then came another blast and rent them open, and made light. It was fearful ; and that Zingara, she whom I had forgotten for years,—the old prophetess,— seemed to be there in the midst of it.

I rose early with a mountain of sorrow on my breast ; and after a long struggle with my outraged feelings, determined to have an interview with Fiammetta. While I dressed hastily, a woman whose face was concealed by her veil, crossed the street and entered the inn. She staid but a moment, and again passing, turned into a court at a distance. Her air was familiar to me ; I thought she had the stature and gait of Margaret ; but there was a sober richness in her dress, a character of decent quiet, that could not (I believed) belong to the companion of the fallen Fiammetta.

While my eyes followed her, a servant entered with a letter, which had (he said) been left by a lady, who had asked no questions and departed instantly. The writing was Fiammetta's. I opened it as if it had been a death-warrant, and read these words :—

"Dear and honored master: it is Fiammetta, it is your pupil, she whom you loved to call your sister, who writes to you, who earnestly conjures you to see her, to listen to the confession of her imprudence, and of the events which led to it and forced her to conceal from her revered benefactor the changes of her fortune. Since then she has caused you to be sought for every where, but always fruitlessly until last night, when fate sent you here :—may it be to forgive one who owes all to you, and who cannot be happy while you think unkindly of her!"

I read these lines again and again; and still as I read, my mind became more confused. This was not the letter of a sinner, such as I imagined Fiammetta, of one lost to all sense of shame: had she been insensible to her abject state, she would neither have cared for my forgiveness nor exposed herself to my reproof. True, there was an avowal of error, but of error that sought and expected to justify itself; it seemed the candor of a high and fearless mind, that only asked to disclose its secrets and their motives. I could not believe her innocent; and yet there was something in the tenor of this short note which almost made me hope, even with the evidences of her ruin before me, that my own imagination and the exaggerated reports of others

A deadly chill came over me; the door opened, and Fiammetta sprang towards me in all the breathless joy of welcome.

I cannot tell what passed,—I never could remember it; but she was forgiven before she had time to justify herself, or I to recollect the guilt of which a moment before I had believed her culpable. And there we sat, and she looked at me with her fair innocent eyes,—kind eyes, with beautiful tears in them,—and called me her dear master; and there was something so chaste and proud in her young mien, that she seemed more fit to be the bride of Jupiter, than the player-queen whom I had seen a few hours before. And yet I still doubted; for when I tried to recollect Zoraida, her image became confounded in my mind with the bright form before me, until they seemed to me the same.

My perturbed silence confused Fiammetta. “Master,” she said, “you do not speak to me; you are displeased,—and justly. But listen to my story, and then deal with me as your heart shall dictate.”

And then she told me, in her sweet way, how

she and Margaret had sorrowed at my absence, and how they lived in solitude, content in all things save only in our prolonged separation; when one evening, as she stood at a window, not knowing that any one looked at her, and spoke to Margaret who was in the garden beneath, a stranger saw her, and humble (she said) as were her claims, found her more to his heart's fancy than any of the proud beauties to whose splendor his eye had been accustomed.

It were long to tell the means he tried, the stratagems he advised to gain her ear, and how he had at last succeeded; and how Margaret had told him her strange story, and spoke so touchingly of her chaste life, and virtuous nature, and friendlessness, that his generous feelings worked within him; and seeing that her happiness, and perhaps his own honor was at stake, he quitted Mayence, and no more was heard of him for many months.

But it was too late: the blow was already struck, and she pined silently; and he too; though he had gone away to forget her, was as unhappy as herself; and so after many trials he went back to Mayence, and there—persuaded by the eloquence of her lover, by the pleadings of her own heart, and by the counsels of Margaret, who having no one to advise with ventured to decide from her own judgment,—she

consented to unite herself with him privately, agreeing to conceal her marriage from all the world—even from me, until her husband should obtain the forgiveness of his family.

"For this great error pardon me, dear master," continued Fiammetta, with tears in her bright eyes. "I know how wrong it was to have used concealment,—and that too in the most important action of my life,—with one to whom I owe more—much more than life itself; and bitter has been my sorrow for it, and many a secret tear, a silent pang has it cost me, to think of what you must have endured in your dark uncertainty as to her fate, who ought to have been to you like a child, gladdening your heart and making it a proud one."

"Ah, Fiammetta!" I exclaimed, interrupting her, "that was nothing. True it was not kind, perhaps not merited; but it matters not now; it is wholly forgotten. It is the sequel,—it is what followed that is irreparable. O Fiammetta! how can I reconcile a virtuous choice, an honorable marriage, with the humiliating situation—(the scroll of paper was full in view)—in which I find you—"

A quick red flushed her cheek, she rose up, and as she stood before me in her indignation, her stature seemed to heighten. Suddenly her lip quivered, tears gathered in her eyes, the cloud

passed from her brow, and sitting down again beside me, she said in her usual tone of gentleness,

"What do you mean, dear master? My error was a heavy one, but did you not say that you had forgiven me? How then have I fallen so low as to merit these awful reproaches?"

"Ah Fiammetta! I exclaimed, "that air of innocence, of candor, cannot impose on one who has seen Zoraida."

A pause of a moment ensued,—a pause made eloquent by her look of speechless astonishment; and then, as if a thought passed rapidly through her mind, she exclaimed, "Good heaven! can it be possible?" then added reproachfully, "and you could believe it? But it was natural," she said with sweetness, as if to reconcile me to myself, "the likeness is so great."

"Likeness!" I cried in a transport of joy, "is it only a likeness? Heaven be thanked for it! And you, my Fiammetta,—can you forgive my soul suspicion?" and I would have fallen at her feet, but she would not suffer it, continuing still to dwell upon the resemblance which the young Zingara bore to her, as justifying my delusion.

"They say, (she added,) that on a nearer approach, the likeness ceases altogether; but when she appears upon the stage advancing from a distance,

all who know me are struck by it. Last night at supper the duke talked of it to every one. But my husband approaches ; you must know and love one who has long honored you."

As she spoke, a young man entered from the garden, and as he advanced towards me with the earnest welcome of long-felt friendship, I beheld, to my utter astonishment, the Prince Albert, whose fine countenance, though seen but for a moment, had left its traces on my memory.

And thus I found Fiammetta,—not lost, not degraded, not the hired exhibitor of a worthless talents; but loved and honored, high and happy. And who that looked upon her,—pure, good, and beautiful as she was, who that read the bright character of virtue which shone in her chaste eyes, could say that her lot was unmerited.

It was a golden day,—that one which we passed together, a heartfelt one, and Margaret who had been a mother to Fiammetta, was there receiving from her the services of a child. As for me, my heart seemed to be renewed within me, the foolish passion which troubled my reason had taken a fitter shape. I beheld in Fiammetta a happy wife, loving and beloved, and the feelings of a brother again filled my breast. Alas. I had not

always been so wise! I had been even weak enough to have forgotten our ill-matched years; but her filial and confiding language brought at once before me the folly of my delusion, and the absurd character which it communicated to an interest that, to be pure or generous, ought to have no touch of selfish reservation, no passion whose gross vapour could thicken or obscure its fair transparency.

Fiammetta had a child—and such a one! just like day-break. I took it upon my knee; it seemed pleased with me, and as I caressed it, its mother soothed it with a sweet, sad melody, to which a moon-struck youth in the duke's household had set some woe-begone rhymes, inscribing them “To the beautiful Zoraida.”

I had always loved music with fervor; it has ever seemed to me to run before painting in the race of passion; the one repeats images which have been before presented to the eye, but the other gives back the emotions of the soul. That day I felt myself more than usually affected by its influence,—it played subtilely on the chords of my soul.

The song was the same which had helped by its superscription to prolong my mistake; he who made it had gone crazed for love of the wild

Zingara, who had abused his reason, and then despised his heart. She had sung to him like Schemselnihar, and he had gazed upon her like the Prince of Persia, until she grew weary and he mad ; “and now (said Fiammetta) he sits all day long in her gateway, and watches till she passes out, and bows gravely ; or seems to catch a word, to whose imagined sound he answers with a sad earnestness, that brings tears into indifferent eyes. She never looks his way ; but at the close of evening, a young girl, who had loved him when he scorned her, comes to the gateway, watches his movements, and draws him with a kind cunning to the dwelling of her mother, who guards and fosters him as if he were her son.”

The story touched me,—there was something in its simplicity that made its way to my heart. I pitied the poor youth whose love was so warm and true, and detested the Zingara whose arts had crossed and crushed a spirit so gently moulded. To please my fancy, Fiammetta sang for me once more the doleful ballad, and the words still rest upon my memory, twisted up with the strange events of that evening, and thus went their mournful measure :—

Cheated lover, why believe her ?

Do not think her vows sincere ;

She will grieve thee, and bereave thee,

Leaving nothing but despair.

Fair her smiles are, soft as day's star,
And her maiden mien is mild;
She can blush, too, if a youth woo,
Looking like a simple child.

And her sweet eyes, to the blue skies
Brightly raising, she can seem
Pure and radiant, at the pageant
Of a lonely lover's dream.

Nothing like her voice was ever
Heard beneath the summer's sky;
When in soft notes that sweet voice floats,
Foolish lover, you should fly.

Fond and faithful, the ungrateful
Will not give to thee a sigh;
Pledges slighted fond hopes blighted,
She will leave thee there to die.

And then with the wildness of an unsettled fancy
he had written underneath, "Beautiful Zoraida,
this for thy lovers, from one who has bought a
sorrowful right to counsel them; but for thyself,
—blessings!"

On that same night there was a concert in the duke's palace, and it was his pleasure that Prince Albert and his fair wife should grace it with their presence. The music was heavy and labored; we yawned and looked impatiently at each other; suddenly the instruments ceased,—there was a short but profound silence, and then broke out a burst of harmony, an ecstasy of sound, a joyous

cry of many voices,—changing at once into the wailings of despair. A second pause succeeded, and then a symphony so tremulous and mournful that those who had smiled before, shed tears unknowingly.

What did all this prelude? we asked each other; and before the answer came, Zoraida rushed upon the stage, her black hair streaming in wild disorder, her cheek pale, her eye unquiet, with a vague investigation in it fearful as the pursuing yet fixed orb of the sheeted spectre. Within the grasp of her small strong hand gleamed a dagger, which she clenched with a firmness that had fury in it. My God, that dagger!—But the duke, what did he say?—I have forgotten. O, he said it was a surprise, and that she would enact Medea—a part only; that scene where she murders her children. Fiammetta shuddered, but soon became absorbed in the horrible fiction.

The prince, who was at that moment in the front of the box, rose, and withdrawing from his conspicuous seat, placed himself less obviously. His emotion was strong and evident, he pressed his hand upon his forehead, his lip worked fearfully. “And yet (I said inwardly) it is but an illusion; men do not tremble at a play.” Just then Zoraida’s face was turned away; suddenly she looked towards us as if by chance,—and smiled!

I have seen the dead, the dying, the mad, the wicked, in all their ghastly stillness, or their fierce despair; but never did human eye behold, or human lip give form to any thing like that smile! The prince rose instantly, and left the theatre, and I followed, full of strange forebodings.

I found him in the same place where we had met in the morning, the small marble saloon that opened on the garden, pacing the floor with a hurried step, and muttering inwardly. He seized my hand as I entered.

"Ah, you are come," he cried; "come to aid me with your counsel. Heaven knows, none can want it more than I do! No words, my friend; let's to the purpose. That wild Bohemian,—she whom they call Zoraida—"

"Good heaven!" I exclaimed, "you do not love her?"

"Love her!" he repeated indignantly. "Foulest of fiends——But listen, and you shall know all. It is now six years since, (being then nineteen, and travelling alone in Hungary,) I passed at mid-day through the principal square of a town, when preparations were making for the execution of a criminal. A crowd had collected to witness the hideous spectacle of a human being, in the plenitude of life, forced violently to a death not craved by nature—the death that forbids atonement!"

"I turned hastily from the spot, and would have entered the inn; for at such moments even the aspect of nature seems to have crime in it, and the beautiful light of the sun, contrasted with the scene acting in its beams, oppressed me. But I had gone only a few steps, when I found the way obstructed by another crowd assembled before the entrance of a prison. Some forced a passage out, that they might secure a place from which they could behold the last act of the tragedy; others pressed round the door to get a sight of the criminal; and I, yielding to a horrible curiosity, at which, I had a moment before shuddered, entered with those for whom a bribe had procured admission.

"The condemned had been just brought forth into the inner court of the prison, a noxious hole, full of black and heavy vapor. She (for it was a woman) stood upright in the midst of her executioners, and offered her hands to be manacled. A priest exhorted her with mildness, and earnestly tendered her the consolations of religion; but she turned away wrathfully, as if his well-meant efforts chased her fierce spirit.

"She was of middle age, and taller than most men, with the wreck of features, which might once have been called handsome; but to which

hardships, and guilt and shamelessness, (more than years,) had given a wild and deadly expression. Her dress and complexion bespoke her of the race of Zingaras, and she bore in her eye the marks of that unbending spirit, which quails not even before the terrible apparatus of a sudden and violent death. It was a callous eye; there was nothing human in its expression; it was the eye of one who had neither hope, or fear, or memory; of one within whose heart all human sympathies, if ever such had existed there, were utterly extinguished.

"But it was not so; unconquerable nature still grappled within her. There was a slight rustling, a faint groan; it came from the dungeon which she had just quitted. 'Ah, she is still there! (she cried.) Once more,—once more, my Kallida!' And then, her strong features relaxing into tenderness,—'Not yet,' she said, struggling with the executioner, who had begun to bind her hands; 'Not yet. Free me, I conjure thee; let me once more hold her in those arms that have nursed and fondled her.'

"While she spoke, a creature who seemed more dead than alive, tottered out and dropped on the ground beside her. The executioner repulsed her sternly. 'Look at her!' she cried, in a voice tha-

made the spectators fall back in terror, ‘and dare to refuse me, if thou art thyself a father. Is a mother’s last kiss a crime? and am I not thine out and out, dressed for the blood wedding? What wouldest thou have more? I cannot tempt with blessings,—I have forgotten how all that is; but I can curse, I of the dark race, who never yet cursed fruitlessly.’

‘Woman,’ said the executioner coldly, and as one accustomed to such scenes, ‘your hour is come. It is time that I should do my duty; I have suffered you to rave too long.’

“At these words, the girl raising herself up slowly from the ground, said in a faint interrupted voice, ‘Mother, I can still embrace thee!’ and then throwing her arms wildly round the neck of her who was bound, hung upon her, and received the last,—long kiss, with which went all that remained of woman from the mother’s heart. The rest was rage, and imprecation, and horrible fearlessness,—too horrible to think of even now.

“The wretched girl left thus alone in the world, and with the brand of infamy upon her, seemed to me in too pitiable a condition to be coldly abandoned to her fate. She was about fifteen, and beautiful in her wild way. I placed her under the care of kind and estimable persons, whom I thought likely to

win rather than scare her into virtue, and who were tempted more by compassion than by interest to undertake the charge. After which I saw but little of her; yet enough to observe, when the first short though excruciating pang was over, a certain insensibility to shame, mixed with an intemperance of passion which presaged badly for her future character.

"Soon after this I travelled into Italy, where I remained two years. It was during my stay at Genoa, that a letter reached me from the persons to whose care I had confided Kallida, giving me a melancholy detail of her perverse conduct and recent disappearance,—how, or with whom, they knew not. I lamented the unfortunate issue of my efforts to reclaim this lost creature, but other scenes and deeper interests soon effaced her from my mind. I saw and loved Fiammetta, and that pure and exclusive love absorbed all weaker feeling.

"It was after I had quitted her at Mayence, that journeying northwards, and finding myself one evening alone at an inn in a small town of Silesia, I asked if there was any place of public amusement open. The landlord, to whom my question was addressed, inquired with a gesture of surprise, if I had not heard of the famous Hun-

garian dancing-girl, who turned all the heads in the district. She had come there (he said) with a troop of players, who were making their rounds in the province, and danced between the acts the national and characteristic dances,—not only of her own country, but of all the wandering tribes that frequented it.

“ My thoughts being then but poor company,—for there was no hope in them,—I went to the theatre to get rid of their importunity, but expecting little amusement from witnessing the grotesque writhings and unseemly turbulence of a vulgar bacchante. She appeared, and I at once recognised Kallida,—tall, formed, bold, but not ignoble, and certainly beautiful, though with a wild and wayward look that had a lurking demon in it.

“ The appearance of a stranger of seeming condition in a small place seldom visited by travellers, is always remarked. Kallida’s eyes were immediately turned to the spot where I had placed myself. She knew me instantly. I saw her redden through the paint with which her cheek was covered; but she danced on, with the same free and unabashed gesture, bringing down tumultuous plaudits by the characteristic expression, grace, and rapidity of her movements. It was to me a melancholy exhibition,

a display of libertine talent, threatening at every moment to overstep the boundaries of decency.

"My interest for Kallida had been much enfeebled by her misconduct; yet still I wished to rescue her from the utter degradation into which she had fallen. I saw her often, and pressed upon her the offer of my honest services; but she had talent,—and knew it, loved her roving life, and being altogether without principle, desired nothing but the means of living in dishonorable splendor. Fierce and proud, she scorned her obscure associates, and despised the vulgar raptures of a village rabble. Her ambition was to produce herself as a tragic actress on the boards of a court theatre; and then, with a fair field of display, and skill, boldness, and beauty, she relied on fate.

"'The last wave must in turn be the first,' she would say, 'and who knows where the tide of fortune may drive me. My star is high in the heavens; there is no prouder in the firmament; and if I am to be the first gipsy-queen, at least I shall wear my crown grandly, and with somewhat better grace than those puling princesses who have milk in their veins,—not blood!' It was useless to reason with her, for she had neither feeling nor judgment; but her passions were like the winds of the desert, uprooting every thing that opposed their passage, and it was my un-

happy fate to call them forth in all the fury of their desparate energy.

“ In short, she said she loved me. She attacked, with the hardihood of one lost to all sense of shame, a heart devoted to another,—and that other Fiammetta. She was tender, passionate, jealous, and revengeful by turns; but her effrontery disgusted, and even her beauty displeased me. I acknowledged it rare and striking; when calm it had a character of grandeur, a regal bearing that imposed; but in moments of excitement it was the beauty of a fury, or a fiend. The likeness which she bore to Fiammetta shocked me; it was a distant look, and faded as she came near, but it had something horrid in it. It was as if an infernal spirit had contrived for evil purposes to clothe itself in the investments of an angel.

“ I checked her advances with stern and unvarying coldness; still she pursued me, and for one whole year chased me from place to place with a determination that had something fearful in it. At length she lost her clue, and I returned to Mayence, and won over my Fiammetta to unite her fate with mine. Kallida heard,—I know not how,—of our marriage. She wrote to me,—the lines were traced in her blood,—‘ The thirst of vengeance (she said) has taken entire possession of my breast; as I have

loved, so do I hate.' And then she swore with horrible solemnity to revenge what she called my 'bitter scorn,' not only on her whom I had chosen, but on all those who were dear to me, though certain to suffer death in the attempt.

"' You saw (she added) how my mother died,—fond wretch as she was,—yet bold. It was a fierce pang when they tore her from me, but she flinched not. Her strong soul resisted wrong,—not death. The heart of Kallida is as firm as hers was; it has felt deeply,—and but once! It has loved as woman's heart alone can love, but it was scorned. Your time will come !'

"I feared this woman, for I knew her capable of all hellish things. So I found out some excuse that satisfied Fiammetta for quitting the spot to which she had traced us, and soon lighted on another hidden from her baneful scrutiny, and there, in our happy security, I began to forget my tormentor, or at least I ceased to dread her machinations. At length my family recalled me to my home. I returned, and my maternal uncle, the good duke, wished that my Fiammetta should be known to him, invited us to be his guests. Last night we were induced to see the play; the name

of Zoraida gave me no hint of Kallida, but the first glance withered my heart within me.

"I left the theatre instantly, and pleading sudden and important business, announced this morning my intention of departing during the night. But the duke would not hear of it. 'Go (said he) to-morrow, if it must be so; but to-night we have prepared some music that will give you pleasure. There must be no refusal.'

"My wife urged me to gratify the duke. I hesitated, but at last, ashamed of the dread with which a woman's menaces had filled me, fatally for my peace consented,—first having (as I thought) made sure that there would be no play, and that I was safe from the hated presence of Zoraida.

"You saw what passed; but you know not that, as I hastily left the concert-hall, some person thrust a paper into my hand, and instantly disappeared, I turned back, but saw no trace of any one."

As he said this, he held a paper towards me; I took it from his feverish grasp, it contained these words:—"Surround yourself with guards, block up your path with swordsmen,—it matters not, your time is come! The dastard surprises his foe, but the bold gives warning."

I reflected for a moment on this fearful threat,—fearful no doubt, though it did not strike me at

the time as altogether meriting the importance which the prince attached to it ; and then began to offer such advice as seemed best suited to the circumstances, recommending that the duke should be at once made acquainted with the whole affair, and that such means should be taken to impotize Zoraida's projects of vengeance as his wisdom might suggest. Prince Albert approved of my suggestion, but his mind seemed lost in the dread of some immediate danger, some meditated vengeance of which Fiammetta was the object. "I have seen fighting, (he said,) battle-fighting in the open plain,—band to band, life to life; have made one in the more desperate warfare of the closed street without breach or outlet, where every blow was murder ; but never did I feel as I do now. I was then alone, but now my other life quivers in my heart."

I was amazed to see a man of his known nerve quail thus before what seemed a visionary danger. I did not then reflect that its vague obscurity made its awfulness. All that I could say to tranquilize his mind I did, counselling and encouraging him to the best of my power.

While I yet spoke, the dial of a time-piece that stood near caught Prince Albert's eye. "In ten minutes (he said) the duke will retire ; let us return,

my friend, and protect Fiammetta to her chamber,—she must not quit the hall unguarded. We will then go to the duke, and take counsel together. But who is it that stands at the window? Some one looks in."

I advanced towards it; it was open. All was still as death; the moon was clear and cold, it rode alone in the heavens. There were no clouds, but the tall pines cast down their shadows, and the grass was pale between them.

"See how beautiful it is," I said. "There is nothing here to harm one."

"Beautiful indeed!" he repeated, "and sad. This calm of nature, contrasted with the uproar within, (and he pressed his hand upon his forehead,) is awful! Night holds on in quiet: the crime which its shadows and its silence hide or engender, disturbs not its repose. But time passes; we must be gone," and as he spoke, he dropped the curtain and moved towards the door. At the same instant the heavy drapery was lifted with violence, a hand was put forth: the prince turned round with instinctive courage, making a step forward, and before I could advance to his assistance, received the dagger of the terrible Kallida in his breast. She drew it out instantly, and holding it up with almost superhuman strength, while I struggled to wrench it from her, "It

is his blood! (she cried); I swore it, and I have kept my word and now for more vengeance!" I seized her hands and after a desperate struggle got possession of the dagger; but she writhed fiercely, like one wrestling with death, and while I grasped her with my right hand, the hold which I had of her with my left became every moment more infirm.

It was a perilous and awful moment; the life or death of all that I loved on earth hung on it. If Kallida escaped from my grasp, Fiammetta was lost for ever. I pointed the dagger towards her—to scare; I had no other thought. She sprang suddenly forward as if to wrest it from me, and before I knew that she was wounded, staggered back a step or two, and then dropped at my feet.

I have little recollection of the rest. I think the room was crowded with persons who ran about wildly, and Fiammetta was there shrieking on the body of her husband; but I remember she whom I had wounded rose up slowly on her knees, and said in an expiring voice, "It was not the dead who did it,—not him—not him. O, that I had died by his hand! But no; it was the unknown one," and her ghastly finger pointed at me.

"Seize the murderer!" exclaimed a hundred voices: and I was seized, and bound, and thrown into a dungeon. There I lay long in darkness,

haunted by unnameable things ; cold hands were pressed upon my forehead, and wild voices laughed and hissed at me, and shouted for the dead. The mad youth stood nightly at my door and sang his ditty, and asked me where I had hidden his Zoraida ; and once I sat under the shadow of a hill, and beautiful spirits came about me, and called to each other in voices that had no breath in them, but came like a stream of light from heaven. And then I wept, and the vision left me, and I was again alone in my prison.

At length the doors were opened and I was led forth to trial, and the sun shone again upon me. Then, and only then, I learned that Prince Albert lived, though still in a doubtful state. "But he lives!" I cried, and a ray of joy,—the first that had visited me in my dreariness, entered my soul.

The trial was solemn, and the issue, at first doubtful. The words of the dying Kallida had designed me as her murderer. My friend, wounded almost to death, and from the first insensible, could only give testimony to the previous circumstances, which bore, as far as concerned me, but slightly on the main event. But at length the truth became manifest, and I was sent abroad acquitted, innocent, and yet a murderer !

The brand was on me,—the prophecy was fulfilled! The world would have taken me back again, but my heart was lacerated. “ You did well, (it said,) and boldly ; you saved the life of Fiammetta, you exposed your own to the fury of an armed and desperate woman, you have rid the world of a monster ; —was she not a murderer ? ” —“ It was in self-defence that you slew her,” said one who would have comforted me, ; and I tried to answer, “ I slew her not,” but the word stuck in my throat. It was an awful word, and when I would have uttered it, Kallida seemed to raise herself up again on her kness before me.

So strongly did remorse work against reason, that even the guilt of Kallida seemed to lose its character of hideousness ; and there were moments when my warped mind found something grand in her audacious passion, something that lessened the horror of her fiendish vengeance, and rendered the memory of my unpurposed crime more than ever frightful. Her beauty too,—as I recollect it in her last movement of life, seemed to me something amazing. I saw her for ever,—dying with her glittering robes about her, and her streaming hair dabbled with blood, with the diadem still set in its dark folds.

I believe my head was not as it used to be, nor my heart either, for the tender cares of Fiammetta and her husband afflicted me. I thought the soli-

tude of the mountains would do me good, and I came amongst them. Here I live, forgotten by all but these two dear friends, who call themselves the cause of my misfortune, but are my only tie on earth ; and happy to forget, among the simple people of the hills, the fatal hurricane of human passions.

He who thus recounted his story to a stranger, was a man passed the prime of life, a peasant of the Tyrol by his garb, but in his mien of high and noble bearing. He had lived long amongst the shepherds of the hills and was revered and loved by them. Whether he is still there or has wandered farther off, I know not.

As the traveller, who wanders amidst the least visited paths of the Tyrolean mountains, ascends from the lonely glen called the Valley of the Lovers, and looks eastward on the distant chain that stretches off towards Carinthia, he may note upon the summit of the highest peak the ruins of a tower. Backwards from that tower the ground descends rapidly into a green opening nestled within wooded hills,—a land of Arcady. It was there the solitary lived, when at the fall of evening he sat before the door of his dwelling and offered its shelter to a traveller, who had lost his way in the mountains.

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